ROY BLAKELEY'S GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE HIKE

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Anthony Cifaratti
5000 East End Ave.
Chicago Ill.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010

http://www.archive.org/details/royblakeleysgoas00fitz

ROY BLAKELEY'S GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE HIKE

BEFORE ROY KNEW IT, PEE-WEE HAD GRABBED THE MAN.

Roy Blakeley's Go-As-You-Please Hike. *Frontispiece* (*Page* 73)

ROY BLAKELEY'S GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE HIKE

BY

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Author of

THE TOM SLADE BOOKS
THE ROY BLAKELEY BOOKS
THE PEE-WEE HARRIS BOOKS
THE WESTY MARTIN BOOKS

ILLUSTRATED BY
H. S. BARBOUR

GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

Copyright, 1929, by
GROSSET & DUNLAP, Inc.

Made in the United States of America

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	First Comes the Noise	1
II	It Sounds Good	6
III	A Detour	12
IV	You Can Never Tell	17
V	A 'Teckinality'	23
VI	The Uncovered Wagon	29
VII	On Top of That	35
VIII	Out of the Rut	40
IX	A Dandy Offer—Almost	45
X	Pee-wee Sticks	51
XI	Marooned	58
XII	And the Girls	64
XIII	All Is Not Brass That Litters	69
XIV	Taking Chances	75
XV	A Warning	82
XVI	A Message	88
XVII	After the Smoke	95
XVIII	A Sad Story	102
XIX	A Big Moment	108
XX	The Winner's Picked	113
XXI	Giddap	117
XXII	Zeff Steps In High	125
XXIII	Stalled	131
XXIV	Swamped In the Swamp	137

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXV	We Have Lots of Hard Luck	142
XXVI	Model Scouts In a Model House	147
XXVII	In Again Out Again	154
XXVIII	And Gone	161
XXIX	All for Gold	169
XXX	This Is a Riddle	178
XXXI	The Same Old Tune	183
XXXII	That's What We Get	189
XXXIII	And Then	195
XXXIV	Pee-wee Needs Sympathy	199
XXXV	A Banana Story	204
XXXVI	Who Said—Hay?	209

ROY BLAKELEY'S GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE HIKE

CHAPTER I

FIRST COMES THE NOISE

THIS is a hike that didn't start out to be a hike. It just sort of happened, *accidentally* on purpose. That's what I liked about it—it didn't have any purpose but lots of nice accidents happened so I called it the go-as-you-please hike. We went as we pleased until Pee-wee came along and then we had to go as *he* pleased, so that's how the accidents happened.

Anyway, I'll write it for you if my fountain pen doesn't break down in the middle of the story. The only thing holding it up (I mean my pen) is an elastic band. Everything will be fine

as long as I remember not to forget that it will bust if I start chewing on it.

Pee-wee's to blame for this sad condition of my precious pen. He's to blame for everything whether he is or not. I don't know who else to blame things on except myself and that won't do because I get enough blame at home.

This time, though, the kid is really to blame because by mistake he almost let a famous horse chew up my pen into two parts while he was feeding it some hay. He used it to stir up some catnip in the hay and it got mixed up somehow so the horse found it before Pee-wee did.

Then we discovered some ink running out of the horse's mouth and just in time I rescued my pen from the jaws of death. So now you'll hear the story—it's a long, hilarious tale. Pretty near as long as the horse's.

Anyway, when I think of it now my pen didn't do so bad. All I had to buy for it was the elastic band. We weren't as lucky as that. *We* means Doc Carson, he's in my patrol, and Pee-wee Harris, he's a patrol by himself but on the quiet he's supposed to be leader of the Chipmunk Patrol in our troop. He's a leader in name only

—one word from him and the kids do as they please. And last but not least, as they say in Siam, was Dub Smedley—he's a nice feller and I'll tell you more about him later.

As I said before we weren't so lucky. I had to buy a new scout suit and hat and so did Doc Carson. Dub lost his shoes somewhere and Pee-wee—oh boy, he was lucky that he didn't have to buy a new face and a few new bones. The only thing he had when he got back to camp was his voice and he didn't have all of that because it was reduced to a whisper on account of him having to coax the horse for four hours straight.

Every time I think of it I have to laugh. My sister says she's tired of hearing it and seeing it so I told her I could laugh just as loud up my sleeve. Jiminy, she ought to be glad I'm alive after that hike and am able to laugh. Another thing, I have to make up for the time I lost in those awful, dangerous moments when I was too scared to snicker.

I won't begin from the beginning—I'm going to begin in the middle of it. That's where Pee-wee came in. He always makes a good loud start so you'll hear him before if not sooner.

That depends on whether you skip any paragraphs. Pee-wee won't care. The quicker you hear him the better he'll like it.

One nice, sunny summer morning, Doc Carson and I were about a quarter of a mile from Temple Camp. It was sometime between July and September—I don't mean Temple Camp, I mean the nice, sunny summer morning.

Temple Camp is in the Catskill mountains. It stays there all year round but we don't. We just spend our summers there and all our money. We should worry about money as long as Pee-wee goes on our hikes.

Anyway, the reason I can't tell you what time of the morning it was is because I always make a vow when I get to camp to never think of time. The only way I can tell the hour is by my stomach and the "eats" bell. Otherwise I don't bother clocks as long as they don't bother me.

I'm getting near the middle now so Doc and I were hiking from camp and we were glad to get away from the noisy bunch. We'd rather hear our own noise where it's nice and quiet.

We were going along slow and easy and could hear ourselves talk fine. We didn't know what

we were going to do in Catskill—we weren't even sure we were going there. But that doesn't matter any to me. I can always think of something.

So while I was thinking about it, Doc and I heard a terrible noise that sounded like thunder and an earthquake all together. We looked up at the sky and all around at the mountains and down at our feet but everything was all right.

We started on and then we heard the noise again nearer and louder than before. So we turned around quick and looked back up the road. That's where the noise was coming from.

We discovered the noise was Pee-wee. He was a little way behind and was running like anything to catch up to us. Every once in a while he yelled "WAIT!" Just as loud as that.

I told you you'd hear him in a minute. So now you can stop if you want peace and quiet because from now on we can't get rid of Pee-wee. That means each chapter will be louder and crazier than the one before. It's up to you.

CHAPTER II

IT SOUNDS GOOD

EVEN when he was almost up to us he kept on shouting for us to wait. I called to him, "Don't worry, we'll wait. We'll have to wait on account of the noise you're making!"

And that was true because the noise was terrible and we were afraid that the birds all around would think the end of the world had come. They wouldn't know it was only Pee-wee. So to do them a good turn Doc and I had to stop.

The kid ran up to us all out of breath. He said, "Where are you going?"

I said, "Somewhere in Catskill."

"Where?" he wanted to know.

"How do I know till we get there!" I said.

"Are you going to hike all the way or catch the bus when it comes along?"

I said, "We'll have nothing to do with the bus. We're busted. What money we have we're going to save for adventure. This is a go-as-we-

please hike. We're pleased to go anywhere."

He said, "It's lucky I saw you fellers and caught up to you."

I said, "Yes, you're lucky. We're not. What did you do, go without your breakfast to catch up to us?"

"No, I didn't," he said. "I only saw you and Doc a few minutes ago. You don't think I followed you on purpose, do you? I had to go to Catskill today on account of something important and I couldn't find you and nobody else would go with me."

"I don't blame them," I said.

"Who?" the kid said.

I said, "Nobody else."

He said, "You're so smart you won't say so after I tell you something. You'll be glad, because after I left camp and was walking along I was thinking it would be nice if I met a few fellers I liked. Then I happened to look up and saw you way ahead and I said to myself, 'Now I'll have company.' "

"Goodnight!" I said. "We'll live to rue the time you looked up. You get the company and we get the nuisance."

He scowled. "You wouldn't say I was a nuisance if you knew how I intended to treat you and if you knew that you'd say I was good enough to hike to Catskill with," he said all in one breath.

I said, "Ah-a! It's a dark, black secret."

Doc said, "It sounds more like a midnight blue to me."

So I said, "All right, kid. Get it off your mind. Tell us the sad story."

"It's not sad, it's something to be glad about!" he said. "You know how all last summer and the summer before that at Warner's Drug Store they gave out tickets with everything we bought?"

I said, "Sure. And you got the tickets away from everybody in camp because you were saving them."

"And from everyone in Catskill," Doc added.

"I didn't take them!" the kid shouted. "I asked everybody if they weren't going to save them to give them to me."

"They had to give them to you or you would have pestered them to death," said Doc. "That's the way you got a couple of dozen out of me."

Pee-wee said, "If I didn't ask, you'd have

thrown them away. So would everyone else."

I said, "Well, now that you have the tickets what are you going to do with them?"

"I have a hundred dollars worth," he said sort of triumphant like. "That means I can have a dollar's worth of anything free in that drug store. Today's the last day to cash in the tickets."

I said, *"G-o-o-d night magnolia!* You ought to treat everybody you got tickets from. Talk about getting something for nothing!"

"I'm asking you to let me hike with you so I can treat you, what more do you want?" he screamed. "Isn't that fair enough if I treat you fellers? Gee whiz, you can't ask everybody in camp on a dollar's worth!"

"Not the way *you* eat," said Doc.

"He'd starve to death on a dollar's worth," I said.

"Shall we start?" he wanted to know.

I said, "Wait a minute, here's someone else coming along you'll have to ask. That gives us twenty-five cents apiece."

Doc said, "If we stand here talking much longer we'll be lucky to get an almond out of an almond bar."

Pee-wee said, "That's your fault. You fellers should have said right away that you wanted me to hike with you. How did I know?"

I said, "We didn't say we wanted you along but we can't have your tickets without having you. In other words, we love you for your tickets alone."

The kid smiled then. He said, "Didn't I tell you you'd be glad you waited for me?"

By that time we could see it was Dub Smedley hiking down alone. He comes from Jersey City but it's no fault of his—he's a nice fellow, Dub is. He has freckles. Anyway, he likes nonsense so I was glad to see it was him.

I said, "You're just in time to join our hike, Dub. We're going as we please. But first the kid's going to treat us to a dollar's worth of anything free. One of us ought to buy a sponge so we can sponge up what's left in the bottom of the dishes. We may need it before we get back. You can never tell with Pee-wee."

Dub laughed and he said. "I'm game for anything. It pleases me if it pleases you and everybody else and if it doesn't why it does just the same."

"Do you know what you're talking about?" Pee-wee wanted to know.

I said, "You're not supposed to know what you're talking about on a hike with me. Dub's been initiated."

The kid said, "He's crazy then too, but who's going to be leader?"

I said, "No one. We're all leaders but we must all be pleased to go wherever we go."

"Gee whiz, that's no kind of a hike," the kid said. "I won't have anything to say, I bet."

"You will unless you get lockjaw or something," Doc said. He's always thinking about diseases and medicines, Doc is.

I said, "Chipskunk, are you pleased to go wherever we go or do you want to quit?"

Oh, boy, he was mad. "Did you ever hear me say I'd quit?" he yelled. "Did you?"

"If everyone's pleased, hike on!" I said.

"Aye," said Doc.

"Aye," said Dub.

I said, "Good! We're carried by a large minority. Everyone's pleased."

"Well, I'm not,"the kid grumbled.

Just the same he walked on.

CHAPTER III

A DETOUR

PRETTY soon Pee-wee got used to going as we pleased because he said, "We can each have a banana split at Warner's, I just figured it all out. Mr. Warner makes peachy ones."

I said, "Figures?"

He said, "No, banana splits. Maybe I'll just get a soda though and buy some candy with the other ten cents. I don't know."

I said, "Neither do I. But why worry? We won't be in Catskill for many moments to come."

"How can it be moments when it's an hour's hike from here to Catskill?" the kid wanted to know.

Dub and Doc started to laugh. Then I said, "That's what happens when you don't study geography. Anyone can tell you that many moments means an hour, maybe two or three. I should worry."

The kid stopped in the middle of the road and

looked at me. "No fooling," he said. "I wish I could get there quicker. I'm awful thirsty. I ate fish for breakfast."

"The poor fish," said Doc.

I said, "I knew a fish once—it was a gold fish. . . ."

"Is this another gold fish story?" the kid yelled.

I said, "Posilutely, no. It's about a gold fish that found the water in his bowl getting very hot and he went up to the top and began swimming around like sixty so he'd cool off."

Pee-wee looked at me very suspicious like but Dub said, "Yes, yes go on, Roy."

So I said, "And he kept going around but he didn't get cool. He was getting warmer and warmer and the water kept getting so hot that it began to boil and simmer until it all boiled away and the bowl was dry. Do you know what happened?"

"No, what?" the kid asked with his mouth and eyes open.

"The poor fish fried," I said in a very sad voice.

"Do you expect me to believe that!" he

screamed. "It's another fairy story just like you always tell."

I said, "You can ask my sister if that honestly didn't happen. Maybe it's the same fried fish that you ate this morning and it's still trying to get into cold water. Stranger things have happened."

The kid gave me a disgusted look. "Only a lunatic could think of such a thing," he said. "Just the same, I'd like to get a drink."

I said, "It pleases me."

Doc said, "And me."

Dub said, "The same here."

Pee-wee stood looking across the field, then he smiled, sort of. Anyway it was a bright look and I always know that means he's thinking. That doesn't happen very often—only when he's not eating and talking. He eats and talks about twenty-three hours and fifty minutes out of twenty-four.

I said, "Hip, hip and a couple of hurrahs! The kid is thinking. Maybe he has an idea."

"For once you guessed something sensible," he said. "I was thinking how one time a couple of years ago I took a hike with Tom Slade. We

took a trail off this road down a little further and in about ten minutes we came to a spring that has dandy water. It's a short cut to Catskill too. Shall we take it?"

I said, "Sure, if you're sure it's the right way. But if you're not sure, why as sure as can be I'll start a friendly feud with you. The scouts may have pure food laws but there's no pure feud law that wouldn't let me start a feud with you if you bring us out the wrong way."

He glared at me. "When I go on hikes with you don't we always come out right at the end?" he yelled.

I said, "'*We!*' You mean *you* do. We don't even come out right in the middle of it. The last hike we were on with you we didn't get as far as where we started from."

"Are you pleased to take that trail I just told you about?" he screamed.

"Now you're talking," I said. "A scout is obedient and you didn't forget that I'm a patrol leader in good standing only I don't stand around long enough. Anyway, I'm pleased to go."

Doc and Dub were also pleased so we started after Pee-wee. In about five minutes we came

to a trail that ran off the road and through some woods. It was all overgrown with weeds and we could tell that no one had been through there in a long time. But we never worry about underbrush or overbrush with Pee-wee along. He always carries his axe on a hike. He does that to convince the world he's a boy scout in case people won't believe what he tells them.

After we were on the trail I said to him, "For the last time, are you sure this is the right trail to the spring?"

He said, "You make me sick. Don't I remember a trail when I see it? I remember this one just as if it was yesterday and Tom and I walked through here to the spring. Then after we had a drink we went on to Catskill. Gee whiz, I don't forget that, you can bet!"

"It's not my bet," I said. "It's yours."

So we went on and pretty soon the kid said, "Even if it wasn't the right trail and it is, it shouldn't bother scouts. Scouts aren't supposed to get lost. Not for long anyway."

"Goodnight!" I said. "It won't be long now!"

CHAPTER IV

YOU CAN NEVER TELL

So we went along that trail and Pee-wee was as quiet as a mouse. He didn't want to miss that spring. Anyway, no one said much until we had been walking more than ten minutes.

Then I said, "What I like best about the spring that we didn't come to yet is that it's a little more than ten minutes' walk from the road. One thing, we won't have to walk a mile for a drink of water."

"And the water is as cool as anything, I bet," said Doc. "It's the most refreshing thing you can drink on a hot day."

I said, "Maybe it's hiding somewhere and we could call to it."

"Maybe you could all keep still till we come to it!" the kid roared. "Everything's got to be on the minute to satisfy you fellers. I didn't say it was *exactly* ten minutes, did I? Gee whiz, lots of people sometimes say a thing will happen

in a day or so and they really mean a week."

"G-o-o-d night magnolia!" I said. *"A week!* Do you mean to tell me that we're likely to hike for a week?"

Doc said, "Keep up your courage, Roy. Hikes have been known to last for years hunting for buried treasure and the like. And we're hunting for something more precious than gold. I'll leave that to Dub."

"My father said lots of fellers lost their minds hunting for water in the desert," Dub said, sort of chuckling.

I said, "You see, kid? This is dangerous business. It's really more dangerous to hunt for water in the underbrush than in the desert. Maybe we passed the brush that it's hiding under."

The kid yelled, "Instead of talking like a lot of fools you ought to keep your eyes open like I am doing. Look for a lot of moss-covered rocks because under that is the spring."

"To the left or right?" I asked the kid.

"Can I remember for years which side it's on?" he wanted to know. "I'm just using my eyes like I told you."

I said, "A smart scout like you ought to be able to walk to it blindfolded. Anyway, we'll look for a spring with a lot of moss-covered rocks under it."

"That shows how you listen," Pee-wee screamed. "It's under the rocks, not on top of them!"

I said, "All right, I'll take a demerit for that. Let's be observant like our little comrade Harris. We'll now proceed with all diligence to look for a lot with some rocks and moss that has a spring."

So Doc and Dub and I put our hands over our eyes like people do when they're looking away in the distance. We made out we were very serious, looking north, south and east and west. Then we began turning over every rock we came to—even little pebbles.

"You're crazy!" the kid shouted. "The whole bunch of you! Do you think you'll find a spring under little pebbles and rocks like that? I meant great big ones like part of the mountain or something. You ought to have sense enough to know that."

"I don't need sense while you have it," I said.

"I thought big rocks from little pebbles grew. Deny it if you dare!"

He just gave me a disgusted look and started on again and we followed him. Then we came to a very wide brook that separated the woods from a lot of big fields. Almost ready to fall across the overgrown trail was a great big poplar tree that must have been struck by lightning or broken in a storm. Anyway, it wouldn't take many whacks with an axe to bring it down.

So I said, "That's dangerous. It might fall on someone. Even us. If Pee-wee talked too loud the vibration might do it."

Doc said, "Well, I'm pleased to take it down."

Dub said, "I'll help."

The kid spoke up then and he said, "I betcha none of you know that if I chop that tree a certain way I can make it fall over that brook and we can keep on in the same direction to Catskill. We won't have to swim across."

"To Catskill?" I said.

"No, the brook," he yelled. "I saw Mr. Ellsworth do it once when we were out on a hike and he says boy scouts could do things like that, when it would help strangers because not everybody

can swim a brook like that. So I'll chop it down so it'll fall right across the brook and we can walk over it like a bridge. Want to see me do it, Dub?"

Dub said, "Sure!"

The reason the kid asked Dub, was because he knew Dub didn't know him as well as Doc and I and he couldn't show off in front of us. So I said, "What's the matter with chopping the poplar tree down anywhere? It wouldn't hurt any of us to swim across that brook and anyway we're looking for a drink of water, aren't we?"

The kid threw me another one of his disgusted looks and he said, "Gee whiz, you haven't any pioneer instinct at all. While we're chopping down that tree we might as well make a bridge for prosperity to cross hundreds of years from now. That's the way the Romans did."

"Not for prosperity, kid," Doc said. "For posterity."

"What difference does it make!" the kid said. "It almost means the same thing and anyway none of you fellers would know just how to notch that tree like I'm going to do because Mr. Ells-

worth said I was the only one in the troop he ever showed how to do it."

"What kind of a tree did he try you out on—a Christmas tree?" I kidded him.

Pee-wee got his axe into action and he said, "You think you're so funny, you just watch how I do it. I'll even carve my initials on it so that everybody that crosses here will know it was me that put it there."

"Prosperity don't know what they're going to walk on," laughed Doc, as we all sat down on the ground to watch the kid labor.

I said, "By the way, what about that spring?"

Pee-wee said, "Well, what about it?"

"Do you think it is lost in that brook?" I asked him.

"Don't talk like a fool," he said. "It might be along that road through the woods the other side of those fields, I don't know. It only seemed like ten minutes to me that day I was with Tom Slade but maybe it was longer on account of him and I talking."

"As long as I know you were talking I won't worry," I said. "We're likely to find it any time between now and January."

CHAPTER V

A 'TECKINALITY'

So THE kid kept on chopping and perspiring while we sprawled on the ground and were nice and cool. Doc said, "Don't forget to let us know when that tree's ready to fall over. We want a few seconds to scoot."

"I told you it was going to fall straight across that brook and it is," Pee-wee said.

So he kept on and pretty soon he yelled and we all jumped up and the tree started to topple over toward the brook. The kid ran back with us and we watched it go over with a loud crash—ker-plunk into the water. It missed the opposite bank by about thirty feet and part of the trunk stuck way out of the water.

The kid stood and looked at the sad spectacle for about two minutes, then he said, "I can't understand why that didn't fall right across. 'T's funny."

"Prosperity won't think so,'
they won't understand it eithe

I said, "Well, now that tha
till the kid carves his initials i
swim across so we can find tha

Pee-wee looked at me and
do any good now and anothe
worth said if it cracks like tha
rotten in the center. So it w
it was rotten, was it?"

I said, "You mean the way

Well, Dub started up a ho
He had to sit down and hol
kid was getting madder by th
of a sudden we heard a voi
made some mess on my prope

Goodnight, we all looked u
coming along in the brook
boots on. He was walking n

mean to say that brook is part of your p
mister?"

He said, "That's what. So's the wo
standin' in."

Doc spoke up and he said, "Well, we
doing any harm—we were ridding your
of an encumbrance. That tree was almo
to fall and would have killed someone
That's why we chopped it down."

"Boy scouts are supposed to do that,"
piped up. "They're supposed to keep th
clear of en-cum—anyway, they're supp
keep the woods clear of them, so do you
doing harm to your property?"

"When ye throw it inter my brook it'
harm," the farmer said.

"I didn't throw it in," the kid said in
voice. "On account of it being rotten

looked at the kid and he said, "If ye couldn't help 'bout that there tree ye still had no right a-trespassin' on my property. I kin have ye fined for that alone."

So I said, "Hey, mister, if it's your property and you don't want any trespassing why don't you have a sign up saying so?"

The kid smiled at me and he said, "Yes, why haven't you a sign up, mister?"

So the farmer chewed some more and then he said, "I have a sign nailed up there if ye want to know it."

Doc said, "We're willing to be shown."

So he started walking downstream and we walked along on the bank and Pee-wee said, "Suppose he has us arrested for trespassing now?"

I said, "You'll have a chance to carve your initials on paper then. Not everybody has that chance."

He said, "How can you fool at a time like this?"

"There's no time like the present," I said. "We may not even have the chance to cry afterward."

Dub said like a good sport, "If we have to go to jail there's one good thing—we'll all go together."

I said, "You bet. United we stand . . ."

"Can't you think of something else to say?" the kid wanted to know. "It's all right to be united but who wants to go to jail when you really didn't mean to trespass or do any harm? Gee whiz, if we do go I hope they'll let me have a drink of water."

"Don't worry about that, kid," I said. "They'll even give you bread with it."

"And a brand new cotton suit and your head shaved off free," said Doc.

"It's no joke," Pee-wee said. "I'm sorry I bothered with the tree at all."

Just then the farmer stopped and said, "That's where it . . ." He was pointing his finger up to a tree on our side of the bank.

We looked up, but we didn't see anything there and neither did the farmer because he stretched his neck and looked all around but, oh boy, there wasn't a sign of a sign. "That's where 'twas," he said in a disappointed voice and began wading toward the middle of the brook.

The kid went toward the edge of the bank and was looking over and all of a sudden he stooped over and he yelled, *"It's in the water!* That makes a teckinality so we're not guilty of trespassing or anything!"

Oh boy, but I was glad. I was really scared that he would have us arrested because he looked mean enough even when he knew we weren't trespassing intentionally. Anyway, the kid nailed it up to the tree it had been on while the farmer looked on as disappointed as anything.

But we should worry. I'll never make fun of Pee-wee's teckinalities again. That one kept us out of jail!

CHAPTER VI

THE UNCOVERED WAGON

We had to swim the brook anyhow because the farmer wouldn't let us walk up any further. He wouldn't even let us go through the fields so's we could get right on the road to Catskill again. He made us go on a path that went northwest—he didn't care as long as it wasn't his property. I bet he wouldn't let his own grandmother walk there.

Pee-wee said, "Anyway, we foiled him in a way and we can walk northwest until we strike a road or a trail going east. We're sure to get to Catskill going east."

"That's the direction to China also," Doc said.

"Gee whiz, you fellers are fine scouts," the kid said. "A good scout shouldn't get discouraged by distance or anything. Anyway, what do you care, we're not in a rush, are we?"

So I said, "Maybe your tickets won't be any good by that time."

"By what time?" he wanted to know.

"By the time we strike a road going east," I said. "Winter might overtake us."

"Don't talk like a fool," he said. "If we don't strike a trail going east soon, can't we blaze one like they did in covered wagon days? Gee whiz, if you're not resourceful, I am."

I said, "Posilutely. Only you'll have to do the blazing. You're the cause of us going toward Seattle when we should be in Catskill now. When are you going to start blazing, kid?"

We came out onto a road going directly north. The kid said, "Not long now. Gee whiz, I'm as thirsty and hungry as you fellers are and I'm not complaining."

Dub said, "Everything will be fine as long as we don't try to hunt for any more springs."

Pee-wee said, "Just the same we'd have a drink by now if it wasn't for that farmer. I betcha that spring was only a little way down that road after you cross the field. You admit it wasn't my fault that he came along, don't you?"

Doc said, "That was a lucky break for you,

kid. Maybe the spring dried up right after you and Tom Slade left it."

I said, "Maybe Pee-wee didn't leave any water there to dry up."

"I won't argue with you about such nonsense," he said. Then all of a sudden he smiled. "Look! Some nice wild blackberries!"

We all looked and sure enough there were about skeentees thousand nice, ripe blackberries all waiting to be picked. So for about ten minutes we were very busy and didn't talk because we were eating them. Especially Pee-wee, he didn't even breathe. He was eating three mouthfuls at a time.

Just then we saw a big truck coming down the road. It was packed full of hay and we watched it until it came right up to us when the kid yelled, "G-go-ng t-t- C-a——ll?" He almost choked, his mouth was so full.

The driver looked down at the kid and laughed. "I pass right near it. Only a little walk for you. Climb in back, kids, and be comfortable!" he said.

Pee-wee grabbed off a few more berries and climbed up into the hay. We all went after him and almost fell backwards as the truck started

off. Anyway, we sprawled all over and it smelled nice and sweet. That made me think of something, so I said, "What would Daniel Boone and the covered wagon days say if they could see you riding in an uncovered wagon instead of being resourceful and blazing a new trail to Catskill?"

The kid couldn't answer right away. His mouth was still packed full and his lips and chin were smeared with blackberry juice. Finally, he swallowed some and he said, "Do you say it isn't being resourceful that I thought of asking for a ride to Catskill? Do you think Daniel Boone wouldn't ride on a hay truck if they had hay trucks in those days?"

I said, "That shows how much you know about botany. Daniel Boone wasn't out for comfort, he was out for adventure and he wouldn't ride a hay truck if he had the chance. He'd rather discover new trails and things. Ask Robinson Crusoe!"

"That shows you're crazy and don't know what you're talking about," he came back at me. "Do you mean to tell me if Daniel Boone was alive that he wouldn't ask for a lift if he was in a hurry like we are? Gee whiz, it takes time to

blaze a trail and isn't it better to not be so pioneerish and get a lift when we only have till noon to turn those tickets in?"

I said, "Chipskunk, do you mean to tell me those tickets are only good till twelve o'clock?"

"That's all," he told me. "Mr. Warner says he's too busy in the afternoons so he just set this morning as the time to turn them in."

"My gosh!" said Doc looking up at the sun. "It must be after eleven now. It would be just our luck to get there too late."

I said to the kid, "Goodnight, why didn't you tell us this last night so we could have made an early start? Or you could have told us when you met us. We wouldn't have followed you looking for a spring that sprung out of sight."

"It isn't noontime yet, is it?" the kid shouted. "Besides, I didn't know I had enough tickets until this morning."

I said, "Where are the tickets?"

The kid fished around in his pockets and brought out everything from a dried-up caramel to a bent safety pin. And just when we began to hold our breath he felt in his pocket and smiled. Then he pulled them out and they were

all wrapped up in the tin foil from an eskimo pie.

He started unwrapping them and we went bumping along—that is, the truck did but we didn't mind being thrown around in that nice soft hay. It was so high we couldn't see the driver from where we were. All we knew was that we were riding along and all of a sudden we bounced up in the air and down again.

When I came up smiling once more I happened to look at the kid and he looked scared to death. So I said, "What's the matter, little one?"

He said, "Gee whiz! I don't know. I don't know what happened to those tickets. When we were bounced up I had them but when I came down I didn't."

CHAPTER VII

ON TOP OF THAT

I SAID, "Excuse me while I faint!"

Doc sat up straight and he said, "What do you mean, you don't know what happened to them?"

Dub started to laugh and the kid scowled. Then he said, "Is it so funny that I got bounced the same as the rest of you and lost track of the tickets? Gee whiz, it took a couple of years for me to get them together!"

Doc said, "Why didn't you hold onto them?"

"Didn't Roy ask me to show them to him?" he wanted to know.

Doc said, "Didn't you see them go anywhere?"

"All I know is they went out of my hand when we struck that rut," said the kid.

We looked back and could see that we were more than a block away from it then. "Maybe they landed in the hay," said Dub.

Very thoughtful like, Pee-wee said, "That's right, maybe."

So we began looking for the tickets. It was just like hunting for a needle in a haystack—we didn't find them. And by that time we couldn't see the rut in the road any more. Then the truck stopped.

"All out!" the driver called. Then he stood up and looked over the top of the hay and laughed. "Sorry I can't take you all the way but I'm in a hurry. Anyway, it's not far for a bunch of scouts. S'long!"

Pee-wee was all set to tell his troubles to the driver but the engine started and the truck began to move so we all jumped off quick. Soon it was out of sight.

Pee-wee stood staring down the road for a second. Then he said, "What'll we do next?"

I said, "We always leave that to you, kid. Just now we're pleased to go without the tickets. You fixed it so we can't do anything else."

"And we're dished out of a free banana split," said Doc, very sad like.

I said, "Yes, it's bad enough to be dished out of one dish but when there are four dishes that

we're dished out of it's a very sad affair."

"You fellers make me sick," the kid said disgustedly. "You'd think you couldn't buy a banana split if you wanted one. Can I help it because . . ."

"Why should we buy one when we can get it free from you?" I said. "Another thing we don't know where a go-as-we-please hike may lead us to—especially with you along. We may have railroad fare to pay before we get back to camp tonight. You never can tell. Another thing we have to have money to eat because if we depended on your promises we'd starve to death."

Gee, he was wild. He said, "Do you mean to say I'm stingy?"

I said, "Far be it from such. You have a heart like an elephant or is it a rhinoceros? Anyhow, it's some wild animal whose heart is half the size of a human heart. Even arithmetic proves that less and less leaves nothing."

He said, "I'm too hungry to get mad at your nonsense. We'll eat as soon as we get to Catskill, hah?"

"Did you ever do anything else as soon as

you get to Catskill?" Doc wanted to know.

He said, "Sure. I buy postcards there too, don't I?"

I said, "Yes, while you're eating ice cream cones."

That kid doesn't believe in three meals a day. He eats the whole day and three meals besides. And when he goes to bed he puts rock candy in his mouth so it will last all night.

It came to us all of a sudden that something was queer about the road that the driver directed us to. It ran west. So I said, "Since when did we hike west to Catskill? Have we been going east all the time?"

Doc said, "Gosh, it didn't seem so to me. We were talking so much though, I just don't remember."

Pee-wee said, "We must have been going east all right because I can see the letter C on the signboard over there."

So he walked over to it and began reading. I noticed that every once in a while he looked back to us in a funny way as if he was puzzled.

"What's wrong now, kid?" I asked him.

He said, "I don't know. There's something funny about this whole business!"

"Again!" I said.

"It doesn't say anything about Catskill on this sign," he said, kind of quietly.

We started to walk over and Doc said, "What does it say, then?"

"It says, WELCOME TO CORNVILLE, ¼ mile from here," said the kid.

CHAPTER VIII

OUT OF THE RUT

"THAT's what you get for talking with a mouthful of blackberries," I said. "That driver thought you said Cornville, I bet."

"Where's Catskill then?" he wanted to know.

"You better get pioneerish again and find out," I said. "Don't ask for any more lifts. We're likely to get out in Texas."

"Anyhow, first I'm going to walk back to that rut and find out if I dropped those tickets anywhere around there," he said.

"Go ahead," I said. "The better the sooner. We'll take a rest while we're waiting."

He said, "Won't you come with me?"

I said, "I'm afraid the rut will disappear like the spring did."

He said, "You're a fine bunch of fellers for a hike. If I'm pleased to go back to that rut aren't you supposed to be pleased too?"

Doc said, "In other words, it's a go-as-Pee-wee-pleases hike, eh?"

"This is the first time I said I was pleased," the kid yelled. "And if I found those tickets again you'd be pleased enough to say you were pleased too."

I said, "Away, Sir Harris. Track down thy mistake while we rest under yonder tree."

The poor kid was so rattled that he walked away. Then he looked back at me and he said, "You can't deny it wasn't my fault that the truck bounced."

I looked at Doc and Dub and I said, "Who is pleased to look for the rut?" They both said aye so we started after Pee-wee.

We had walked quite a little way when we saw an old fashioned buggy and a gray horse. An old man was driving the horse along like a snail. So I asked him, "Mister, how many cubic feet do we have to hike before we get to Catskill?"

"Whoa, Elmer!" said the man to the gray horse. Then he looked at me. "Want ter know the way ter Catskill?"

I said, "Yes. We were looking for a spring and here we are, lost, lone and weary." I read

that in a magazine once about some pigs that wandered away from a sty. That's how they felt.

Doc said, "He's right, mister. The spring we were looking for sprung a leak and now it's springing up in some other spring."

The man looked at us as if we were all going crazy. He said, "Ye be a-goin' the wrong way naow."

"That's on account of me," the kid piped up. "We're looking for something I lost."

"It's not his head, mister," I said. "He lost that when he organized the Chipmunk Patrol."

The man just stared and he said, "If ye want ter go ter Catskill yer hev ter git back the way yer jest came 'bout one mile. The road yuh come ter first on yer right is the road ter Catskill."

"How many miles is it, mister?" Pee-wee asked him.

" 'Bout fifteen mile. Giddap, Elmer!" said the man and he drove away.

"Bye-bye, Elmer," said Dub, breaking out in hysterics again.

I said, "Well, after all it's just a little hop to Catskill from here—in an airplane."

Pee-wee said, "Gee whiz, how did we get so far away?"

"Ask me another," I said.

"Which way shall we go?" the kid wanted to know.

"Foodward," quoth I.

"Aye," said Doc. "The sun is high in the heavens."

"Anyway," said Pee-wee, "Cornville isn't far and we can eat there."

"And phone there," I said. "We better tell Mr. Ellsworth that on account of meeting Pee-wee we didn't find a spring and we met a mean farmer and on account of him we're fifteen miles from Catskill. I'll tell him if we have to walk we'll be back by Labor Day."

So then we came to the rut but we didn't find any tickets. Each one hunted in a different part of the road and the kid looked in the ditch. All of a sudden he let out a yell and he stooped and picked up something.

I said, "Is it them?"

"No," he said. "It's something better. Gee whiz, don't say I'm not lucky! I found four good tickets to the carnival in Cornville and to-

day is Royal Order of Lions Day for the benefit of Better Babies. They're the ones who sold these tickets. I bet it will be peachy."

"The carnival or Cornville?" Doc asked him.

"The carnival," he said, still reading the tickets. "It says ticket entitled bearer to be admitted by the R. O. O. L."

"Do we have to have a lion admit us?" I said.

"It's no time for nonsense," he said. "C'mon, we'll hurry and eat first. Then we'll spend all afternoon there."

Doc said, "How are we going to get back to camp by night?"

I said, "We should worry about that. We'll leave that to Pee-wee, too. He has lots of dandy ideas—for making mistakes."

CHAPTER IX

A DANDY OFFER—ALMOST

In about a half hour we made our grand entry into Cornville. Some entry, believe me. There was hardly anyone around except a few cows and two or three chickens.

Cornville measures about nine by twelve. That's the size of the rug that's in my sister's bedroom. It isn't on the map—I mean Cornville isn't but it tried hard enough to get on that day with all the excitement that Pee-wee caused.

There's about twenty houses in that town and two churches and five stores including the post-office and village green. They're all painted yellow—all except the village green. That's green with a white statue in the middle of it.

We came to the field where the carnival was being held. It wasn't open for business yet a man told us. They didn't open until one o'clock so we went around looking for a place to eat in.

Then we saw one of those traveling lunch wagons and it had a sign on it that read

HARRY'S FAMOUS HAMBURGERS.

It stood right on the edge of the field and smoke was coming out of the chimney.

Pee-wee said, "Oh boy! I'm going to have a regular dinner—soup to dessert. I might have two desserts even. I'll see what he has."

So we all piled in Harry's famous lunch wagon. Believe me, it smelled good enough to eat. I mean the food that was cooking.

Harry stood behind the counter in a big white apron and he was short and fat and bald. We sat down at the counter and I said, "Can we have three regular dinners at a reduction, mister?"

Harry laughed but the kid frowned at me. "Whatcha mean, *three?*" he yelled. "Where do I come in?"

"Do you call your appetite regular?" I asked him. "You don't fit in with nice, dainty appetites like ours. You need two regular dinners and four desserts so you can't get a reduction. As it is, you'll be a total loss to Harry. You'll eat up all his profit."

"You think you're so smart," the kid came back at me. "I bet if I went out and advertised how much I could eat in here it would help Harry's business. I bet if I went out and told people that I ate two dinners and four desserts this place would be packed with customers!"

Harry was laughing like anything and he said to the kid, "If you can eat two regulars dinners and four desserts, I'll let you have the whole business for the price of one."

Make out that kid didn't smile when he heard that. "It's a go," he said. "I'll eat everything you give me."

I said, "Hey, Harry, don't give him anything on paper plates because he might eat them too! He'd eat tin cans if they were covered with chocolate ice cream."

"Well, we'll try him out and see," Harry laughed. Then he started to get the dinners ready and Doc and I kept on kidding poor Peewee. Dub sat there laughing like he always does. That's one of the reasons why I like to get the kid's goat, because Dub has so much fun listening. The other reason is because I get fun out of it myself.

Dub hasn't any mother and his family are poor. They live in Jersey City and he works hard all winter after school and on Saturdays so he can go to Temple Camp in the summer. I would work to get away too if I lived in Jersey City. But anyway, he's a nice feller and a good scout you can bet.

While we sat there waiting the food kept on smelling nicer and nicer all the time. Harry set our places and all the time the kid watched him like a mouse. He wasn't saying a word, he was so hungry.

Just as Harry started dishing up the soup a little thin man in a straw hat came into the lunch wagon with a big paper in his hand. He looked at us and then looked at Harry and he said, "You be Harry, proprietor of this here lunch wagon?"

Harry answered, "I sure am. What can I do for you?"

So the man said, "Wa'al, I be Mr. A. Tuck, d'ye know me?"

"I believe it," I whispered to the kid.

"Believe what?" he wanted to know in a stage whisper.

"That he's A. Tuck," I said. "He isn't wide enough to be A. Seam."

So A. Tuck said then, "I be Sheriff of this here county and constable of this here village. I got a warrant here for to seize yore fixtures to satisfy the demands of yore creditors."

I expected to see Harry look sad but he didn't. His face looked red and mad as anything and he said, "Go to it, rube! The pleasure's all yours." So then he took off his big white apron and came from behind the counter and sat down on one of the stools.

A. Tuck grinned sort of like you see them do in the movies. "Yer ain't got no permit for to transact business in this here county or in Cornville, have ye?"

"You know I haven't!" Harry snapped. "And you're the one that wouldn't give me one, Mr. A. Tuck! You were afraid that I'd take some of the business away from the refreshment stand at the carnival. I found that out. Don't think I'm so dumb. I found out you own that field the carnival's on so it's clear why you wouldn't give me a permit!"

A. Tuck kept on grinning but it was a sickly

grin and he didn't look our way at all. Then he sort of turned and said to Harry, "Ye'll have to move across the county line soon's we take yore fixtures. Can't stay here without a permit."

He went to the door and called in a couple of Cornville men that looked like himself and they all went around gathering up everything—knives, forks and spoons and even the dishes. They carried them outside and put them in a truck and on the last trip they took the pots and pans away with the food in them.

The hungry kid spoke up and he said, "Can't you think of some teckinality or something so he can't do it?"

Harry smiled and he said, "Sure, I'll get it all back soon's I get some money from New York. He's busted me up for the carnival trade anyway so I might as well take a rest while I'm waiting."

We sat there so surprised at what had happened that we couldn't speak. And the worst part of it, we almost ate! There wasn't a sixteenth of a second between the soup and us.

That lunch wagon was emptier than the desert when A. Tuck got through removing the fixtures.

CHAPTER X

PEE-WEE STICKS

ANYWAY, Pee-wee kept alive longer than that and without food too. When he saw the last of the food gone he said to Harry, "How are we going to eat now?"

I said, "This is no time to be asking Harry riddles. He has troubles enough without you pestering him."

"Who's asking him riddles and who's pestering him?" the kid yelled. "Don't you think I feel as sorry for him as you do? All I'd like to know is how we're going to eat! Gee whiz, even Harry has to eat I bet!"

Harry said, "Don't worry about me. I had mine long ago. You kids will have to go out and buy something out of the general store, I guess."

The kid's face was all drawn up in a frown. He looked as disappointed as anything. I knew he was thinking of how near he had been to a lot

of free eats. Then he said, "Is that money you told us about—is it on the way here?"

"Yes," Harry said. "But I don't know how long it will take. I'm not worrying though. A day out of business won't kill me. What I'm mad about is that they're going to hold over the carnival for two days more and now that mean old cuss has ordered me over the county line."

"Don't you care," I said. "He'll wake up some nice morning and find himself asleep."

"Where is the county line?" Doc asked Harry.

"Right across the road," said Harry.

"If I stick with you do I still get the two dinners and four desserts?" the kid wanted to know.

"Absolutely," said Harry. "Only you're foolish to wait around, kid. It may be an hour and it may be the rest of the day before I get it."

"I don't care," Pee-wee said. "I'll wait for two hours and see. I'm not a quitter. Anyway, nobody else ever offered me all that for nothing. Gee whiz, I'll stick. You see!"

I said, "Well, if Harry was sure, we'd stick too. But he's not sure and he's not worrying about what A. Tuck took away from him so I'm

going and see what's doing at the carnival. Whoever is pleased to go, say . . ."

"Aye!" said Doc.

"Two ayes," said Dub.

I think the kid was sorry right then that he had promised to stick to Harry and wait for the free meals. But he didn't have courage enough to say so. He looked at us as we got up to go and I knew he was wishing he had kept his mouth shut. Then he said, "Don't stay long, Roy. Just look around and see what they have over there and come back and tell me. Maybe by that time Harry'll have his money and he'll be cooking dinner again."

Harry said, "Maybe is right. But if I do get the money I'll give you the whole thing I promised you for nothing if you help me hitch up the horses and move across the county line. That will be a big help, kid."

The kid was all smiles. For a few minutes then he changed his mind about being sorry. He was sorry for us that we hadn't promised to stick. So he said to Harry, "That's a go! Maybe I'll stick for more than two hours even!"

Then he said to me, "You see what I'll get for sticking and see what you won't get? You'll be sorry, I bet, when you see all the food I'm going to get afterward. Don't you want to wait and stick too?"

I said, "No, I'm too hungry. Besides we want to see what's doing at the carnival. If Harry's got his money by suppertime and we're still here, why, we'll have supper here."

Harry said, "Sure thing, kids. You're wise. See you later!"

Well when Pee-wee heard Harry say that I knew he was sorry for sure because he said, "Don't stay long like I told you before. Bring me back a hot dog, huh? If you can carry them bring me two! I won't be so hungry then while I'm waiting."

So I called back, "Do you want some nice dessert, too?"

Doc said, "Maybe you'd like some popcorn pastry?"

Dub said, "Would you like a custard or jelly filling?"

I said, "Say not so. The kid likes cement

filling best of all. It lasts longer. Isn't that right, Pee-wee?"

"You're a pack of fools!" he yelled and went back in the lunch wagon and slammed the screen door behind him.

So we walked around the carnival grounds and they were just opening. We celebrated it by buying two hot dogs and a bottle of soda apiece and we got some for the kid too. Then we bought popcorn and salt water taffy for our dessert. After that we started back to find where Harry had moved.

When we got to the place where he had been before we saw a truck standing there that had

AUNT AGGIE'S HOME-MADE PASTRIES

printed on each side. There was a man standing right by it with his back turned to us and he was looking across the road. Harry's wagon was standing in the center of it and a big crowd of people standing on either side of the road were all looking too.

When we got up to the man we could see there had been an accident. A big truck was turned

over in the middle of the road and another one was lying alongside of it all smashed up.

I asked the truck man, "Did anyone get hurt, mister?"

He said, "Luckily, no. That's one of those tank trucks all smashed up there. It had some kind of tar stuff in it and when the other big truck hit into it the tank burst or sprung a-leak or something like that. Anyhow, it's made a mess. Talk about a river of tar!"

I said, *"Goodnight!* Is it all over the road?"

"Is it!" he said. "Why, I'm supposed to deliver some pies to Harry's lunch wagon that's standing out there now and I just got here when the accident happened. It'll be a month of Sundays before Harry gets out of it and besides, the horses were so frightened when the crash came that they broke loose and ran away across the field. I heard that no one's captured them yet. Maybe he'll never get 'em!"

Dub said, "How'll Harry get his wagon out?"

"Don't ask me!" said the pastry driver. "How'll Harry get out for that matter! No one can walk in that stuff till it hardens. Then they'll have to chop him out, I guess."

"That may be years," said Doc.

Dub started to laugh. He laughed and he laughed and he was almost hysterical when he said, "And nobody's even thought about poor Pee-wee!"

CHAPTER XI

MAROONED

THERE was nothing else we could do at the time so we bought a lot of pies from the pastry man. The crowd kept getting bigger and bigger so we decided to push our way down toward the edge of the road. We thought Pee-wee would feel better if he could see us anyhow.

About two inches separated us from the tar so we sat down at the edge of the field right where the kid could see us from the back door. It was facing us and we knew it wouldn't be long before he'd look out to view the disaster from there. Anyway, it was just as the pastry man had said, you couldn't approach that wagon from the north, west, south or east.

So we started to eat our hot dogs when Dub said, "Sh! He's at the back door, now."

I said, "Everybody take a mouthful before speaking and every second thereafter."

So they did, myself included. Then we looked

up together as if we were surprised to see Pee-wee standing there. I made my face look like I had forgotten about him being in that wagon at all. And at the same time I divided a juicy pine-apple pie in half. Half stayed in my hand and half went in my stomach.

Dub and Doc did the same thing and all together we rubbed our stomachs and said, *"Mm-mm-mm!"* We said it good and loud and long and Pee-wee stood watching us with his mouth wide open as if he could almost taste it too.

But the more we ate the madder he was getting. And when I started on my second pie—peach, and the kid's favorite, I yelled, "S'peach-piekid. Mm-mm!"

"You think you're so smart!" he screamed. "I'd be out there eating pie too only I promised to stick and I'm not a quitter and besides when I say I'm going to stick, I stick!"

"Bet your life you'll stick!" I said. "You can't do anything else now. You're stuck for fair. Otherwise you'd be out here eating your hot dogs and popcorn and taffy and pie and soda. I bought some for you but if you don't get away

soon why we'll have to eat them because on a hot day like this they won't keep!"

"Is that doing me any good?" the kid wanted to know. "Can't you throw a pie over here or a hot dog or something?"

"It would land in the tar," I said. "And another thing maybe Harry'll be cooking in a little while."

"Don't talk like a fool," he yelled. "If you can't throw a pie here how can anything else get here?"

Doc said, "How does it feel to be shipwrecked on the Black Sea in a lunch wagon?"

I said, "Now he's a jolly old tar!"

The kid yelled, "Say, are you going to eat up all those pies before I get rescued?"

"That depends on when you're rescued," I said. "They might melt—in my mouth."

He said, "If you eat them all it isn't fair. I'm hungry and I want to eat as well as you!"

Just then we heard a voice beside us say, "I thought you boy scouts were able to go for days and days without eating!"

Goodnight! When we looked up who should we see but two girls from Catskill that Doc knew.

He introduced them to us and the girl that spoke first, her name was Flora Flippant and the other girl's name was Polly Pert. They were nice girls —nice and pretty.

So I said to Flora Flippant, "Say what you just said good and loud so the kid can hear you. Then you can listen for the thunder."

So she did and the kid frowned over at her. "Sure boy scouts can go for days and days without eating," he yelled. "But they've got to be prepared, don't they? You have to eat for days ahead because, gee whiz, you can't fast right away on an empty stomach. Even the pioneers had to get filled up first, anyone can tell you that and besides girls can't understand those things anyway."

Polly Pert laughed like anything. So did all the people standing around watching. Then Polly said, "Why, how absurd! Of course girls understand. Perhaps, better than you. I read in a book once that Daniel Boone could go for fifteen days without a mouthful of food."

"I bet he had a whole lot to eat before that and I bet he drank lots of water," the kid came back at her.

I said, "Sure, every time it rained in the desert and that's as much as twice a year."

The kid yelled, "Shut up! Who's talking to you!"

Flora said, "My, what a snippy little scout!"

And Polly said, "He's a little dear though."

"All that talk isn't getting me out of here," the kid said in a disgusted tone.

Harry had come to the back of the wagon and he stood smiling and enjoying the mortal comeback between us and our hero of the Black Sea. So I said, "Look here, kid, Harry's not complaining and he's as much marooned as you are—even more so. Anyhow, between you and me and the tar there must be some way to get you out of there!"

The girls laughed loud as could be and so did all the people. In fact we were keeping the carnival from carnivalling so that goes to show you that people would rather hear the leader of the Sterling Silver Foxes and the leader of the Chipmunks in mortal comeback than ride a merry-go-round or a Ferris wheel.

When the laughter died down a little the kid yelled, "Do you think you were clever saying

that? Anyone knows there *must* be some way to get Harry and me out of here. If you'd use your head for thinking instead of for nonsense you'd be better off."

Just then I looked up and saw a worried face alongside of me. It belonged to A. Tuck.

CHAPTER XII

AND THE GIRLS

"HEY, Mr. Tuck," I said. "Can't you help us rescue our brother scout from the tarry sea? He's macarooned."

"I wish I had some right now," roared Pee-wee. "They'd keep me from starving to death."

"See!" Doc said. "He admits he's starving. He hasn't had any lunch."

"He's had nothing to eat since breakfast," I said. "And for breakfast he had some trout and a dozen pancakes and a half dozen crullers. No wonder he's starving."

Dub rolled over on the grass. Doc examined him and said it wasn't hydrophobia or measles—it was just a chronic attack of laughter. A. Tuck looked at him and then over at Pee-wee and scratched his own head. Then he said, "How did that little feller get on that there wagon?"

I said, "He was waiting to get two regular dinners and four desserts for the price of one din-

ner. That is, he was waiting for Harry to get the money first so the dinner could be cooked and then he'd 'tend to the rest himself."

"But now he anxiously awaits rescue from the black and tarry sea," said Doc sadly.

I said, "Sure. Think kindly of our comrade, Mr. Tuck. He's more to be pitied than scolded. He thinks they make tar out of tar bags."

"Why don't you shut up and let Mr. Tuck think?" the kid roared.

"You're right, kid," I said. "Two heads are better than none."

Finally Mr. Tuck said, "Wa'al, if I want to hear the last of your nonsense, I spose I'd better think o' something."

Doc said, "Don't exert yourself, Mr. Tuck. Give Pee-wee a chance to think. He's some fixer. He knows how to fix everything for good—even himself."

So then I told Mr. Tuck I thought he ought to get a ladder from the fire department, if they had one and stretch it from the field to the roof of the lunch wagon. I guess he thought it was a good idea because he went away and came back in a little while with the whole Cornville fire de-

partment. There were three and a half men including Mr. Tuck.

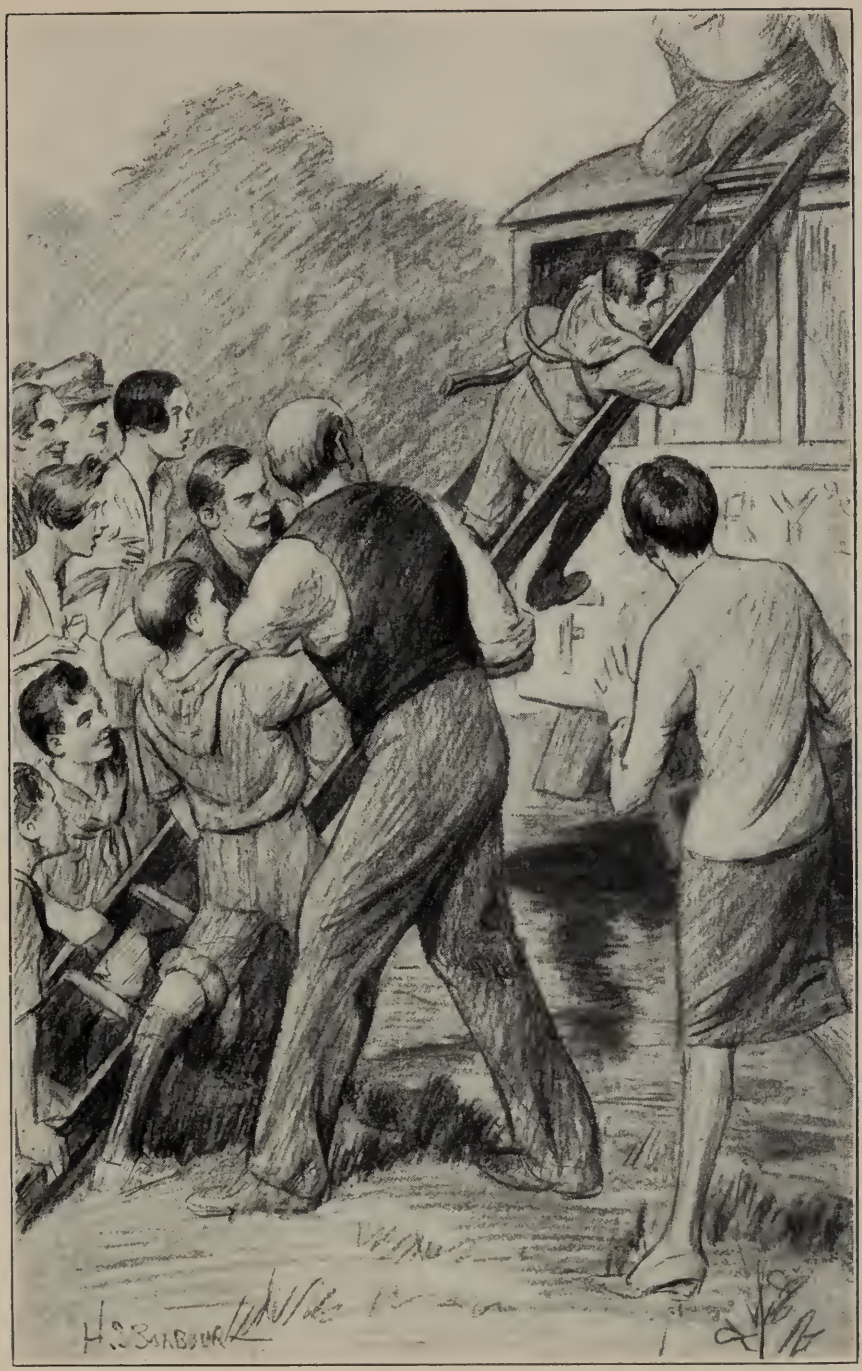
We all helped them to get the ladder onto the roof of the wagon and Harry climbed up first and steadied it. Then when it was safe the kid came down each rung backwards and every once in a while the girls would say "Ah," and "Oh!" You know how they do. That's when the ladder swayed a little bit and they thought Harry and the kid would slip down into the tar.

Polly Pert said, "That was just too clever of you, Roy, to think of that ladder. Otherwise they would have had to stay all night in there."

"Like fun I would have," the kid stopped to yell. "Do you think Roy's the only one that can think of a ladder? I'd have thought of that too if I had to eat what he's had. Gee whiz, a feller can't think so quick on an empty stomach. Any doctor'll tell you that."

A. Tuck really smiled. It was his first offense and you could tell he wasn't used to it. That's the reason I never stop smiling. Once you get out of practice it's hard to start again.

After Pee-wee and Harry were settled on terra cotta once more, why the carnival started and the



THE KID CAME DOWN EACH RUNG BACKWARDS.

Roy Blakeley's Go-As-You-Please Hike. *Page* 66

people all went back. The fire department took the ladder back and Harry said he was going to see if he could telephone at the general store in the village.

He said he was going to sue the tar people for his horses and the damage it did to his wagon. Anyway he was happy-go-lucky about it and told the kid that if we were there when he got his money and his wagon out of the tar, why he'd keep his promise. So Pee-wee was satisfied and we started off for the carnival grounds.

After we had gone a little way the girls told us they'd meet us afterward because they had to go and tell their people where they were going to be. They said they wanted to show us around because they came to the carnivals at Cornville every year and knew them much better than we did.

Pee-wee didn't like to hear that. He doesn't like anyone to show him anything. Especially girls. He'd rather be the one to do the showing. Anyway he didn't seem to like Flora Flippant and Polly Pert at all. He knew they were on to him, I guess.

Before they left us to help Pee-wee eat, Flora

said, "We'll meet you at the merry-go-round in ten minutes. We'll show you what an adorable little thing it is!"

"Don't you think I could show myself what it's like?" the kid wanted to know in a very sarcastic way.

"Oh, of course we do," said Polly. "But we want to ride it the same time you do because we know you've never seen any just like this one before. Won't it be too funny for anything!"

"Funny!" the kid repeated disgustedly. "Gee, girls make me sick with their thinking things are funny when they're not. What's so funny about it? It's fun if you can catch the brass ring and get another ride but girls can't do that hardly ever because they think it's funny just riding around and they're laughing so they never catch the brass ring!"

"Oh, is that so!" said Flora. "I don't know about that, Walter Harris! Do you catch the brass ring so much that you can afford to brag about it?"

"Sure, I do," said the kid. "Most every time I catch it. You wait! I'll show you how it's done. It's easy if you only know how."

CHAPTER XIII

ALL IS NOT BRASS THAT LITTERS

On account of thinking that the kid wouldn't be rescued for hours we ate up what we had. Another thing, we had to help hold that ladder to rescue him and we wouldn't have had any place to put pies and hot dogs so I thought the best place was in our stomachs. I figured all the time when he was rescued that we could get more where they came from.

But, goodnight! When we got to the refreshment stand why the man told us that he didn't have a hot dog in the place and that the man they got their pies from had broken down somewhere along the road. Anyway he said he hoped they'd come along soon and that we should come back in about a half hour or so.

The kid was as mad as anything to eat a light lunch in his starving condition. He bought some popcorn and taffy and soda and he said, "This is a fine lunch all right. After you fellers have

had all the pie you want I have to eat this stuff."

I said, "You're better off with something light. After anyone's been as near starvation as you were, it's not good to eat anything heavy. Any doctor'll tell you that."

He gave me an unfriendly look and he said, "Well, one thing, I'm going to fix it so that I won't get left tonight. I'll fix it so that I have a big meal I bet. Gee whiz, I'm even left for a hot dog."

"Think of the starving children in Europe," said Doc. "Do they get popcorn and salt water taffy and nice soda when they're thirsty and hungry?"

I said, "Doc's right. They only get black bread to eat, so don't complain of your lot."

"A lot you fellers care," he said. "Just the same like I said before, I'll fix it all right tonight. You'll see!"

After that terrible threat we went over to the merry-go-round to meet Flora and Polly. They were all smiles when they saw Pee-wee even though he was snappy with them. They loved him for himself alone. All the girls do for some

reason. But I should worry. If they don't smile at me I can always smile at myself.

So then we bought the tickets and as soon as the music stopped we all made a dive for the horses. Goodnight, that was some rush we had on account of it being so crowded. The kid stopped to help put the girls on a couple of zebras that didn't have all their stripes where the paint was rubbed off and by that time all the animals were taken except a camel.

Nobody wanted to sit on that because it was too high and hard to reach down from to catch the brass ring. So the kid stood alongside of it for a second and frowned back at me because I was sitting on a black horse that had lost its nose. Part of its right ear was missing too but I didn't care. That's all part of the game.

Anyway the kid said, "How do you expect me to get the brass ring on this thing?" He was speaking of the camel.

Polly Pert spoke up and she said, "I'd suppose that a smart scout like you could overcome any obstacle. You could stand in the stirrup, couldn't you?"

Then Flora said, "Come on, Walter. Don't you try and back out now on an excuse like that!"

Just then the music started and the thing began to move and the kid could hardly keep on his feet. The ticket man came around and helped to boost him up on the camel and from there he climbed out onto the head part and held tight to the brass pole. He sat facing us.

In a few minutes we were going good and a bunch of kids came in to wait for the next ride. Then the brass ring man climbed up on the little platform and he opened a box full of brass rings and stood them on the high desk beside him.

Just as I whizzed past him he took a nice bright ring out of the box to shove it through the long, black iron arm. So I yelled to the kid, "Hey Chipskunk, get ready now and show the girls what you can do!"

"Leave it to me," he screamed back. "I'll show you even in the face of obsa—obstacles and camels."

Polly Pert laughed in a little scream like and she called, "We're watching, Walter!"

"All right, *watch!*" he roared. "That's all girls can do is watch!"

So we came to the iron arm and we all watched but the kid just missed it. "If at first you don't succeed," laughed Flora.

"Who's doing this?" the kid roared. "I was just practicing that time!"

Around we went again and the kid reached way out with his one hand. Just as he got up to it he made a grab and before I knew it he had grabbed the man on the platform and the desk went over kerplunk, brass rings and all. They were rolling all around us and I noticed that the kid had gone from his camel.

Everyone was laughing so, I couldn't hear myself think. When we came around again the music was stopping and I saw the kid sitting on the floor kind of bewildered like. But in a second he jumped up and began helping the man put back the desk so I knew he wasn't hurt.

The girls and Doc and Dub all found a brass ring—in fact everyone on that merry-go-round had one. I found mine alongside of my horse's hind foot. Pee-wee was still helping to clear up

the wreckage and the man was smiling so everything was all right.

Anyway the music started and we were whizzing around again before the kid was finished. Everyone that passed him smiled and held up their brass ring so he could see it. When I passed him I yelled, "Thanks for the free ride, kid. I'll always leave it to you. Even in the face of camels."

"Sure you will," he screamed back. "If it wasn't for me you wouldn't be riding now! None of you!"

CHAPTER XIV

TAKING CHANCES

THE kid didn't try for any more brass rings and we left the merry-go-round. He said on account of having such a light lunch it made him dizzy and that's how he fell.

The girls wanted to go and see an exhibition or something on the other side of the field so they left us for a while. Then we bought some more popcorn and Doc bought peanuts to help the kid's stomach along.

After that we came to a booth that was all draped in flags and behind the booth was a great big tent. As we stood there looking at it a man came out and climbed into the booth and he said, "Would you scouts like to take a chance on an automobile? It's in a good cause—for the benefit of defective children."

I said, "Sure we will, mister. I think that's the same disease our little Chipskunk has so if

it helps him I'll be glad to buy a chance. I'm poor but dishonest."

The man laughed and the kid said, "Don't listen to him. He doesn't even know what defective means and he's making fun of me. He thinks it means I'm crazy but it doesn't, does it, mister?"

"That's rich," laughed the man. "But just the same it would be nice if you could all take a chance. One of you might win it."

Doc said, "What kind of a car is it?"

And Dub said, "How much a chance is it?" Poor Dub doesn't have a whole lot of money to spend but yet he isn't a piker.

So I said, "Let the kid treat us to a chance. He was going to treat us to a banana split so now we'll split the difference."

Pee-wee looked at me and I winked so Dub couldn't see me. So the kid said, "That's a go. That's only fair."

And the man said, "You won't be sorry, boys. It's one of the best cars made. It's a special made Krusher Super-Six and only twenty-five cents a chance. Cheap at half the price."

We each took a chance and the man gave us tickets with numbers on. Then he took us around behind the tent where the car was standing and showed us all the important parts. Gee, it was one peachy car, I'll say that!

The kid said, "If I win the car, how'll we get it to Temple Camp?"

I said, "You can push it the first fourteen miles and we'll push it into the garage."

"If you won it," the man said, "there'd be a licensed man to drive it wherever you wanted it delivered."

"My father could get me a chauffeur as long as the car doesn't cost him anything," said Pee-wee, with it all planned out. "He wouldn't have to keep him after I'm old enough to drive it."

Doc said to the man, "You can deliver it to Pee-wee right now, mister. He's just as good as won it."

I said, "Maybe you'd better telegraph your father and ask him whether you can have the chauffeur up here by the time the car's given away."

The kid said, "You're so smart, maybe you'll

win it yourself, how do you know? And if I win it, haven't I as good a chance as anyone else, haven't I?"

"Posilutely," said I. "So has Doc and Dub."

He said, "Sure, that's what I mean. But anyhow, no matter who wins it we'll get a ride home."

I said, "I hope so, because if we have to hike back to camp again we won't get there this summer. Maybe if we eat more popcorn and drink more soda we'll puff up and be lighter than air and won't have to walk. We'll just blow into camp."

"You're crazy," the kid said. "Another thing, I don't want any more popcorn—I want to eat. The more candy I eat, the hungrier I get."

The man told us to be back at the tent at seven o'clock. He said that was the time the car would be given away and he hoped it would be one of us. So I told him we'd be back with bells on to crush in on the Krusher.

Then Doc reminded us that we'd have to phone and get special permission from camp if we were going to stick around Cornville until seven o'clock. "I'll tell Mr. Ellsworth what

we're staying for and tell him not to worry if we don't show up by midnight. He'll know we're hiking it on all fours."

"You fellers make me sick," the kid said. "Can't you say we *will* win it and that we *won't* have to hike it back? Gee whiz, you haven't any faith in yourselves or anything on earth, you haven't!"

"You're absitively mistaken, Scout Harris," I said. "We have faith. We have the greatest faith in your mistakes. We know that eleven times out of ten you'll make them. Isn't that faith?"

"Shut up!" he said. "We're not talking about mistakes, we're talking about hiking back to camp."

We found a phone booth and Doc went in to do the dirty work. While we stood outside arguing with Pee-wee the girls came along again and as soon as they saw us, Flora Flippant said, "Why, if it isn't that clever little Walter Harris —the brass ring boy! The third time we meet, it's up to you to treat."

"That's superstition," said the kid, scowling like a dark cloud. "I don't believe in things like

that. I have more important things to think of, I have."

"For instance," said Polly Pert in that way that some girls have.

"First I want a regular meal tonight . . ." he began.

"And what's second, Walter boy?" smiled Flora.

"Don't call me, 'Walter boy'," he said. "I'm no baby and besides I'm a patrol leader so that shows you how much you don't know and another thing I'm going to win the special Krusher Super-Six that they're giving away tonight for the benefit of effective children."

Well, the girls just about died—laughing. I hear my sister say that sometimes. Flora Flippant was almost hysterical when she said, "Now isn't he just *too* funny! *Effective children!* Oh my, oh dear, I'm . . ."

"That's right, laugh like a lunatic!" said the kid. "Girls are fools! Instead of being observant they laugh at nothing."

Polly said, "Really! And what do you want us to observe, *Walter boy!*"

The kid gave her one of his dark black looks

and he said, "That great big swell car that just came up in the field with the tall man in it—I bet you were laughing too much to observe it's a Krusher car too. Gee whiz, I'd rather observe things than laugh like a fool!"

"What a perfect little imp you are," said Polly. Then she and Flora turned around to look at the Krusher limousine.

When Flora saw it she smiled triumphant like and she said, "Why you're so observant, Scout Harris, do you mean to tell me you don't know who that man is? His picture's forever in the papers."

The kid stared at the man just getting out of the car and he said, "Do you think I ever look at pictures in the papers? I read more important things, I do. I read the news so I can learn things, so do you expect I should know who that man is?"

Flora smiled again and she said, "Well, Walter, if you want to learn important things it's important to know who that man is because he's famous. He's no other than the President of Krusher Motors. He's Mr. O. Stone Krusher, that's who he is!"

CHAPTER XV

A WARNING

Oh boy, that man's worth an awful lot of money so you can just imagine how we watched him. Pee-wee especially. He stared until O. Stone Krusher disappeared inside the tent where they were selling the chances on his big Special Super-Six.

Sort of dreamy-like, the kid said, "Gee whiz, I only wish I'd get the chance to speak to him. Just once! I wish I could think of a question to ask him or something."

I said, "If that's what you'd like to do, go in and tell him that I just discovered what bacteria is."

"What are you talking about?" he screamed. "Do you think a big man like him would care what bacteria is or that a crazy thing like you discovered it?"

"That's just the kind of a man that would

care," said Polly Pert. "Nothing's too small for them to overlook."

"Not even Pee-wee," laughed Dub.

I said, "He wouldn't overlook the kid. He'd just look over him. That's all."

Flora said, "Well, Roy what is bacteria? I'm dying to know."

"He don't even know himself," said the kid.

"I do," I said. "It's the rear end of a cafeteria. No sooner said than stung!"

"Do you think I'd tell him such a nonsensical thing?" the kid wanted to know.

"Just the same, he'd laugh at a joke like that," said Flora. "He's a very plain man. He was born in Cornville and he always remembers them here at carnival time. Sometimes he gives money but this year he gave them the car."

"Maybe I wouldn't say something nice to him if I win it! Oh boy!" yelled the kid. "I'll tell him I'll donate it to my patrol."

"Yes. On the condition that it's yours when you want it," said Doc.

"And that will be all the time," I said.

But the kid didn't hear us because he was already on his way over toward the car. So we

followed him and he sat down right near it under some shady trees. Then we sat down too, to indulge in the pastime of kidding him some more.

The chauffeur was sitting in the car and pretty soon he got out. Maybe he thought we were going to make too much noise because he glanced at us kind of annoyed like and he went on through the carnival grounds.

We didn't make any noise though, because Pee-wee was very quiet and stared at the big Krusher sedan all the time. He wouldn't even get mad at the things I was saying, so I know he was thinking of the Super-Six.

Flora said to him, "When you stare like that, Walter, you remind me of a savage little Indian. But I know you're not savage at all. I know that underneath you're just a dear little imp."

Pee-wee looked at her sort of disgusted like. "How do you know what a savage Indian looks like?" he asked her.

"Oh, I know a perfect pile of Indian history," she said.

"I bet you never talked to real Indians like I did," the kid said. "I went to a reservation once

and I talked to a real chief and he told me how they used to burn bad Indians at the stake."

"Horrors!" said Polly.

I said, "That's nothing. The kid ought to tell you about himself but he's too modest so I'll tell you. The Indians haven't anything on him. He was out camping once and he held the frying pan too close to the flames when he was cooking the meat. The whole business went up in a blaze and before anyone could save him he was burned at the steak!"

"I knew you'd turn that into something nonsensical," he said. "You can't even sit down and talk sense when the other people are talking sensible."

"I am sitting down," I said. "But I won't stand for anything."

Polly said, "I'm thirsty."

Dub said, "That's all right. Pee-wee knows where there's a spring."

I said, "Atta boy, Dub. You'll soon be disqualified to join the Silver Plated Foxes."

The kid said, "You're making Dub just like yourself and all your bunch."

Doc said, "Join us and you'll laugh yourself

to death. Join the Chipskunks and you'll walk yourself to death."

So we made it up then to treat the girls but Pee-wee said he wouldn't go. He wanted to sit and look at the Krusher in case O. Stone Krusher came out. He didn't want to miss the chance of talking to him.

We were just going to start away when we saw two fellows with caps on coming down the same road that we had come. They were walking slow and talking and at the same time looking all around. When they came to the Krusher car they stopped and stared at it.

They stood there for a few minutes and one of them looked up and saw us watching them. They strolled off into the carnival grounds then and we didn't see them again because there was too much of a crowd.

Polly Pert looked in the direction they had gone and she said, "I didn't like their looks at all. They didn't act like honest people, somehow."

I said, "Maybe it's two moving picture actors in disguise."

Flora said, "I agree with Polly. Didn't you

notice the way they looked at Mr. Krusher's sedan?"

The kid said, "If that isn't nonsense! Gee whiz, do you think you can say a couple of fellers aren't honest just because they stop and look at a swell car? Don't everybody look at swell cars and don't I sit here and look at it so does that say I'm not honest, does it?"

Polly said, "All I can say is, I wouldn't trust them very far."

"Gee, you're the limit," said the kid, disgusted. "You didn't even see their faces."

We left the argument with Pee-wee under the tree and walked away with the girls. After we were about a half a mile away he yelled, "Ask that refreshment feller if those hot dogs are in yet!"

So Doc yelled back, "If they are, do you want to be remembered?"

"Remember to bring some back!" he roared.

CHAPTER XVI

A MESSAGE

WHILE we were walking along the two fellows with the caps on came past us. One of them sort of looked up and then away again and I noticed that Dub turned around and stared after him.

So we came to the refreshment stand and the man told us that he was still out of hot dogs. So I thought I better go back and tell Pee-wee the sad news and I left the girls with Doc and Dub.

After I left the crowd behind I saw the kid running toward me from across the field. I waited and when he came up to me he said, "Do you say I'm not lucky?"

I said, "What ho! Did you find buried treasure under the tree or something?"

He said, "No, I've got a good excuse to go and talk to Mr. O. Stone Krusher. Do you say I'm not lucky now?"

"I'll tell you better after I hear what the excuse is," I said.

So then he told me that after we had been gone a little while the two fellows came back. He said they went straight over to the Krusher sedan and looked it over again.

The kid said he left his place under the tree and went over too and when they saw him they looked surprised. One fellow smiled and said something about it being a swell car. So then Pee-wee told them that it belonged to Mr. Krusher and how he was waiting there himself to see if he could get a chance to talk to him.

The one fellow that had smiled asked him then if he wanted to talk to O. Stone Krusher very bad. Well, you can imagine the way the kid answered. He was all smiles when he was talking about it to me even.

He said he told the fellows that Mr. Krusher was in the tent and that he knew the man that sat outside the tent because we had taken chances on the Krusher Super-Six. They told him then that he was just the kid they wanted and that he should go to Mr. O. Stone Krusher in person

right away and tell him that two business friends were waiting at his car.

I said, "Business friends?"

The kid said, "Sure, you heard me!"

I said, "Why don't they go and see Mr. Krusher themselves if they would like to talk to him?"

The kid said, "How do I know? Maybe they saw how much I wanted an excuse to talk to a big man like Mr. Krusher and they felt sorry for me and just let me go on that account."

"Did you see him yet?" I asked.

The kid said, "No. I was just on my way when you came along. Want to come with me?"

I said, "I'll walk as far as the tent with you and wait outside. I'll let you have the glory all to yourself."

We could see the two fellows still standing by the car and they were watching us. Just before we walked into the crowd, Pee-wee turned and waved to them and they waved back. "Gee whiz, they were nice to let me do this," he said. "Maybe it'll help us to win the Super-Six better if I get acquainted with Mr. Krusher."

I said, "Do you think Mr. Stone Krusher will

pick out your number and let you have the car just because you deliver a message to him?"

"Do you think I'm crazy to think such a thing as that!" he yelled.

I said, "You're crazy enough to think anything."

"You won't say I'm crazy if I get friendly with Mr. Krusher and tell him all about the scouts and everything. Then maybe you can't tell what he'll do. That's how Mr. Temple first learned about the scouts and now look what he does for us—donating camps and everything. Gee whiz, a scout's got to be kind of like propaganda sometimes and show a man like Mr. Krusher what scouting does for kids. I could even invite him up to Temple Camp and when he sees what a swell place it is and when he hears how Mr. Temple donated it, you don't know—he may want to give the scout organization something too!"

I said, "Sure. He may want to give them the Catskill mountains only he can't because they don't belong to him."

"There's no sense to that," said the kid. "A rich man like Mr. Krusher must own lots of

property just like Mr. Temple does. Maybe he even owns a lake."

"Ask him if he owns the Atlantic Ocean while you're about it," I said.

Just then there seemed to be a commotion in the carnival grounds and when we walked over we noticed that everyone was looking around and up and down like. Then people began running past us and when we looked we saw smoke coming from the woods where the road runs through coming into Cornville.

While we were watching, Doc and Dub and the girls ran up and Polly said, "Why are you two standing so still?"

I said, "I don't know. Why?"

She said, "Because there's a fire in those woods and it's going to be terrible, the refreshment man said."

"How does he know?" the kid asked all excited.

"Because we haven't had any rain and something's happened to the water there and they don't know if the fire department could get a line over there or not," she said all in one breath.

We saw the fire department go then and Flora

said, "Someone will have to go up to the cross-roads and not let any traffic through or they'll be burned up. They'll have to go back where they came from or wait until the fire's out because the other road is all torn up."

I told Doc about the two fellows sending the message by Pee-wee and they all listened. The girls especially. So then I told them that I'd go on with the kid and that we'd meet them later.

When we got to the Krusher tent it was all open. Pee-wee peeked in and so did I but the only one we could see was the man we had bought the tickets from. The kid said, "mister, can you tell me where I'll find Mr. Krusher?"

The man said, "He's on his way over to the woods with the fire department to help them fight the fire. He used to be a volunteer before he left Cornville and made his money. What do you want?"

The kid told him and the man said that Mr. Krusher had probably seen them by that time because the fire department had to pass right by where his car was parked.

Gee, the kid was disappointed and I guess the man saw it because he said, "If you want to do

something, you scouts, you can help Cornville and the public in general if you'll run down to the crossroads and direct all the traffic back where they came from. There's no other way of getting into Cornville now, tell them."

The kid smiled and he said, "Do I have to have a badge or anything?"

"No," the man smiled. "I guess your scout regalia is sufficient."

So we started across the fields scout pace and the kid said to me, "This is even better than delivering a message to Mr. Krusher. He'll hear how we took charge of traffic and he'll realize that a scout can do anything in an emergency and that's better because he'll want to know what else we can do. After all, we're lucky I bet."

I said, "Don't put me in it. I'll have nothing to do with your luck!"

CHAPTER XVII

AFTER THE SMOKE

AFTER we got to the crossroads, Pee-wee was kept busy—sitting. There were as many as ten cars that came along and one truck and the kid made the driver turn right around and he wouldn't give him a chance to say a word.

We sat down on a rock in between times waiting for the fire to go out. The flames were still shooting up in the air and it was almost supper time before it looked as if they had the best of it.

I decided to go down then and find out if it was safe for us to give up our traffic job and let the people through that didn't care whether they came or not. No one seemed sorry except that big truck driver that I told you about.

Anyway, I walked down and asked one of the firemen and he told me the fire was under control and that if we'd just stay a little while longer why he'd let us know.

I couldn't see Doc or Dub but then there was

such a big crowd you couldn't tell which from who. So I walked back to tell the kid and I knew he'd be mad. He was anxious to eat and so was I.

When I told him he said, "Why didn't you stay around and look until you found Doc and Dub? Gee whiz, I don't see why they couldn't have relieved us for a little while anyway so's we could go and see if that refreshment feller's got those hot dogs in yet!"

I said, "Doc and Dub don't even know where we are and if I tried to find them in that crowd watching the fire I'd been looking all night. Anyhow, I'm sick of cold dogs and stale rolls."

He said, "You don't think I'd rather have them than a regular dinner, do you? But anything's better than nothing and we can't get a regular dinner in this burg. We'll have to wait till the car's given away and then we can stop somewhere on our way to Catskill. Maybe we'll find some nice place."

I said, "Maybe. Anyway, we won't have long to find out. By the time you clear out the refreshment stand it will be seven o'clock and then we'll know the worst."

"You mean the best," said the kid. "Gee, it's funny, but I have a feeling like we're going to ride home. I have a feeling we won't have to hike back, honest I have. So that must mean we're going to win the car. My mother believes in that—she says, go according to your pres-rr-en—anyway, it's a word that looks like presents and sounds like peppermint or something. It means a hunch, sort of. Well, that's how I feel—that we're going to have a dandy ride back to Catskill in that Krusher Super-Six."

I said, "Kid, you've been eating too much popcorn and salt water taffy and drinking too much soda. It's gone to your head."

He said, "Gone to my head, nothing! I tell you we're going to ride and not hike. You'll see if what my mother says about that word doesn't come true!"

So then a fireman waved to us from down the road that everything was all right and we hurried back, you can bet. Everyone was back in the carnival grounds again and we hunted for Doc and Dub.

We found them under the tree and Pee-wee wasn't there half a second before he noticed that

Mr. Krusher's sedan was gone. He said, "Gee whiz, did Mr. Krusher go away in his car?"

Doc laughed like anything. He said, "He did not! His car went away without him and without the chauffeur. You fixed it so it could."

The girls started in to laugh and the kid said, "What do you mean I fixed it? What have I got to do with Mr. Krusher's car going away?"

"You had everything to do with it," said Doc still laughing. "If you hadn't gone on a fool's errand to deliver that message to Mr. Krusher, his *business friends* wouldn't have gotten away so easy. They were a couple of automobile thieves, that's who they were!"

"And Mr. Krusher thinks they set the woods on fire too, so that it would delay anyone in chasing them," said Flora.

"I told you I wouldn't trust them very far," Polly reminded the kid. "They looked suspicious and I was right. They planned the whole thing out, I'm sure, and I wouldn't be surprised but what they knew that the other road was torn up."

The kid stood looking into space for a while and finally he asked, "Do you think they just bluffed me with that message to Mr. Krusher so's

they could get rid of me and get away with the car?"

I said, "Posilutely. They didn't like your company."

"Does Mr. Krusher know all about the thieves talking to me and how I tried to deliver their message?" the kid said, kind of anxious like.

Doc said, "Sure he does. Everyone at the carnival knows it."

"What did he say?" the kid wanted to know.

Doc said, "I think his parting words for you were, Don't believe everything you're told or Don't trust two men with caps on if they stand beside a Krusher Sedan."

I said, "In other words, two business friends may be wolves in cheap clothing!"

"You fellers have a lot of sympathy, all right," the kid said. "Maybe Mr. Krusher'll be mad at me when it isn't my fault, and just when I had a good chance to get in right with him about scouting and all, those two fellers had to foil me. Gee whiz, how did I know they were a couple of thieves and I bet if I told Mr. Krusher how it all happened and how I wanted to do those fellows a good turn to deliver their message I

bet that Mr. Krusher wouldn't be so mad!"

"He won't be mad if he gets back his twenty-five thousand dollar car," said Doc. "That's what the ticket man told us it cost. He said it was specially built."

"Anyway, the chauffeur should have stayed in the car," said the kid. "When a car costs as much as that it shouldn't be left alone."

"Neither should you," I said. "I can see you need a mother's constant care. You're all right except that your head's in the wrong place."

The kid made out he didn't hear me. I don't blame him—I don't even listen to myself sometimes. Anyway, we could see that he was thinking the whole thing over and in a little while he said, "The only thing for me to do is to go to Mr. Krusher and explain what happened. Maybe he'll understand because if I listen to you fellers any longer I'll be thinking I committed a crime or something."

Polly said, "If you want to do that you'd better get his address from the ticket man because he left for Catskill about ten minutes ago."

"Gee whiz!" said the kid in a sad voice. "Did you talk to him?"

"We were all talking to him," spoke up Flora. "What were you saying to him, huh?"

Flora laughed, "Oh, you're curious now, aren't you? Well, we told him what a little imp you were and that you seemed to have a knack for making mistakes when you really mean to do your best."

"Oh, you did, did you?" he said as mad as could be. "Well, let me tell you all something—if I make mistakes so does everybody else and mine mostly are good ones because in the end I notice how it comes out all right for somebody like a good turn, so do you call that a mistake?"

The girls both laughed and made out they didn't hear the kid. Then Polly said, "We were able to give Mr. Krusher a fine description of the men and he paid us a compliment. He said *we* should have been the boy scouts because we were so observant in noticing that the men looked suspicious and all."

Pee-wee said, "It doesn't take any brains to notice how two men look suspicious and anybody can be clever in telling what two men look like, but it takes brains to catch fellers like that. Just let me see you do *that*. That's all!"

CHAPTER XVIII

A SAD STORY

FLORA laughed out loud. She said, "You very seldom ever hear of men like that being caught. Not right away anyhow. Even the police couldn't do it. So there, Mr. Smarty!"

The kid began walking away. He was scowling like anything and he said, "Come on, fellers! When I get mad it makes me hungrier than ever."

The girls would like to have gone on teasing him but he got too far away. So they told us they might see us when the Super-Six was given away but after that they were going back to Catskill.

So after that we walked on toward the refreshment stand and Doc said, "Well, I guess that's the last of them."

"The last of who?" Pee-wee wanted to know.

"The last of the Super-Six and the last of Mr. Krusher's two 'business friends'," I butted in.

"You took the very words out of my head—I mean my mouth," said Doc.

Pee-wee glared at both of us. "What do you mean it's the last of them?" he roared. "Do you mean to tell me that the police can't find that car and those two fellers if they keep after them long enough?"

"Maybe," said Doc. "But we might be all dead and gone by that time."

"You're right Doc," I said. "They might even find the Special Super-Six in the junk heap ten years from now."

"Gee whiz, you fellers make me sick, you do," the kid said. "I'd like to bet anything that the police will find them because in a crime like that they'll try harder—I mean the police."

"How about yourself?" I tried to kid him. "How about trying yourself?"

The kid looked disgusted. "You're crazy!" he shouted. "Even those fellers set those woods on fire so that's two crimes they committed, so do you think it's time to talk like fools?"

"There's no time like the present," I said. "What do you want us to do, cry? It's no fault of ours that they committed two crimes. If we

had known they were going to do it I would have told them not to."

"You're crazy," the kid said. "Anyway, I'd just like the chance to find them and I bet I'd make fools out of them because they'd feel ashamed if a boy scout like me got the best of them. They won't fool me again, I bet, because I'll find out first before I deliver any more messages for thieves."

We didn't say anything to the kid because we knew he'd had enough for a while. Then we came to the refreshment stand and he got right down to business and said, "Well, here I am for the hot dogs and I can eat six, because I'm so hungry!"

Doc said, "Sh! Why don't you eat the even dozen. The dogs will never know the difference."

So the man came up to the counter and he said, "Boys, I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I won't have a hog dog in this place tonight."

Pee-wee said, "Do you mean you haven't got any *yet?*"

The man said, "Exactly. I'm losing a lot of business by it too. Just on account of those automobile thieves that stole Mr. Krusher's sedan."

"Gee whiz," said the kid. "What have they got to do with your hot dogs?"

"What haven't they got to do with it!" the man said, all fussed up like. "They started the whole thing, didn't they?"

"How?" the kid wanted to know.

"Well, you remember me telling you that the truck that was to deliver the hot dogs had broken down. The driver was delayed four hours and when he started for Cornville you can imagine how mad he was. Then when he got to the crossroads and on account of those thieves setting the woods on fire it knocked the whole thing in the eye.

"The driver called me up from Catskill about ten minutes ago and he said he was sorry but some bossy little kid in a khaki uniform stopped him at the crossroads and told him that on account of the fire in the woods he probably wouldn't get into Cornville all night.

"He said this fresh kid didn't give him a chance to say anything but ordered him to turn right around. He said otherwise he could have put down the case of hot dogs at the crossroads and I could have sent someone down to get them.

Now on account of that fresh snip not letting the driver talk we won't get the dogs until morning. The driver said he won't come back this way again tonight."

Doc put his head down on the counter and said he'd be up for air in ten minutes. The kid just stood there staring at the refreshment man as if he couldn't believe what he had heard.

I said, "Then there'll be no hot dogs in the old town tonight, hey, mister?"

"Nary a one," said the man and he went to wait on a customer.

I said, "Well, will you have some popcorn or popcorn or some salt water taffy. There's four you can select from. If you'd like, some more salt water taffy. Also we have two kinds of soda —soda and soda. It's delicious either way— stewed or boiled."

"If you think you're making fun of me, you're mistaken," said the kid. "I was told to order the traffic back and it's not my fault that the driver didn't make me listen. He's a fool if he didn't know I'd let him stop if he only shouted that he had those hot dogs to deliver at the carnival. Right away I'd have known who he was."

I said, "Kid, I compliment you. It wasn't any fault of yours. You did what you did in the line of duty. You saw your duty and you did it noble."

The kid said, "Just the same, I'm the one to get left like always. You fellers are always shouting about what you don't get on account of me, but it's me that doesn't get anything on account of doing good turns and thinking about other people. Gee whiz, after all that's happened today, I thought I'd get a hot dog anyway. Now all that's left is that popcorn and taffy and soda and I'm sick of the names of them. Can't you fellers think of something better to eat than that until we come to a restaurant afterwards?"

"Sure," said Doc. "I bet I know the very thing for you. Something that Roy didn't think of."

"What's that?" the kid wanted to know.

"Peanuts," said Doc.

CHAPTER XIX

A BIG MOMENT

WELL, there was a big crowd standing around the tent when we got there. The man was in the ticket booth and pretty soon he held up his hand for silence.

Everyone got quiet then—that is, everyone but Pee-wee. He stood alongside of me and he gave me a poke in the ribs and in one of his stage whispers he said, "You got to watch these fellers that pick out tickets when they're giving away things. Especially cars. They generally pick out a ticket for a relative or a friend. They're not so honest always."

"What's the matter?" I said. "Are you getting cold feet already?"

He said, "No, but there's so many people that have taken chances and I was wondering if that feller in the booth is honest."

I said, "I'll go up and ask him."

Doc said, "Tell him Pee-wee wants to know

if he's taken a chance. If he says yes, ask him if he don't think he's taking a chance in taking a chance on one of his own chances!"

Dub let out a squeak and laid his head on my shoulder to muffle the yell that came after it. But the kid couldn't see anything funny in it. It was all serious business to him and he yelled, "SHUT-UP!" to Doc.

Everyone was looking at the kid then and the man in the booth walked over on the platform they had built and looked back our way to see what the excitement was. When he saw that it was Pee-wee he smiled. Then he said, "Perhaps the little scout back there would like to come up front and pick out the chance for the lucky winner."

"Sure, I will!" the kid roared and started right up to the platform.

I said, "Mister, you'd better blindfold him good and tight if he's going to do any picking. He might pick his own number on purpose."

The kid climbed up on the booth and looked back where I was and yelled, "Do you say I'd do anything dishonest in front of these people? Gee whiz, do you want everybody here to think a scout

isn't trustworthy and that I'd break one of the most important scout laws by cheating with these tickets? Anyway, if I did win the car I wouldn't keep it for myself. Like I told you I'd donate it to my patrol."

So I called to the man and I said, "Just watch him, mister, that's all I say. He said he's going to donate it to his patrol. He organizes a new patrol every two weeks sometimes and they either move away or join some other patrol. They leave him flat. When he gets back to camp tonight even he may find that he's the only member of his patrol. So that means if he wins the car he'll donate it to himself."

Everyone was laughing so loud that Pee-wee couldn't hear himself talking back to me. Anyway, by the time things were quieted down again the kid had to help the man put the ticket box in front of the platform where the crowd could see it.

Then the man turned around to the people and he said, "This box holds the duplicates of all the tickets that have been sold. Whoever has the number corresponding to the one picked out by this little boy scout is the lucky winner!"

The people all cheered then and Pee-wee smiled as if the applause was all for him. Then the man took a large white handkerchief out of his pocket and I saw the kid glance at the box as if he made a wish that he'd pick out the right one.

After the man blindfolded the kid he said that he'd turn him around twice. After that he was to walk slowly to the box and pick out the ticket.

Everyone seemed satisfied with that idea except some mut at the back of the crowd. He yelped three times so that meant no—according to the signals of my patrol. But the man didn't pay any attention to that and turned the kid around slow.

After the second turn he stood Pee-wee right in the line of the box. Then he gave him a sort of shove and the kid put out his hand like everybody does when they're blindfolded and he went that way step by step toward the box.

The mut at the back started yelping again and kept it up until I couldn't hear myself watch Pee-wee. Then all of a sudden I saw the dog break through the crowd right past us and up front to the platform.

He went straight for the kid and was barking

like anything. Pee-wee still had his hands out and I guess the mut thought that he was playing with him or something. Anyway he began jumping up at his hands and was making a terrible racket and the ticket man hurried over to chase him away.

Before the man could get up to him, the dog made another leap and the kid made a sort of sweeping motion with his hands to frighten the dog away. I guess it scared the mut all right because he made a dash to go through the kid's legs.

When Pee-wee felt that he must have gotten scared too because he raised one of his feet to step out of the dog's way. Then when he brought his foot down he stepped right on top of the poor mut.

There was a terrible yelp out of the dog and the kid went sprawling on all fours. He landed up against the ticket box and knocked it over, ker-plunk!

Goodnight, in one second there were tickets all around and poor Pee-wee sprawling among the chances.

CHAPTER XX

THE WINNER'S PICKED

For awhile, there was pandemonium. (I heard my mother use that word at a movie once.) It was a funny picture—the movie I mean, and the hero and heroine were throwing pots and pans at each other in a kitchen scene. I guess that's what the word means—pan for pans and demonium must be Latin for pots. Anyway the people standing around that tent weren't throwing anything but shouts and laughter but it doesn't hurt if I use that word pandemonium for the noise they were making.

So then the ticket man picked the kid up out of the chances and brushed the tickets off him and unblindfolded him. Then he told the people that on account of the accident and the likelihood that they wouldn't find all the duplicates, that a line had to be formed and everyone holding a ticket must pass by the booth. He said he'd give us all a slip of paper and that each one should

write their numbers on it and keep them, dropping their tickets in the box.

So everyone did and it was like a march to Jerusalem, believe me. It was a lot of fun and when we got up to the booth I leaned over and told the kid that I was throwing in a couple of pebbles for good measure. Doc told him he'd put in a couple of rotten tomatoes for luck.

The kid scowled when he heard that and he said, "If there wasn't so many people around I'd say something but I have better sense than to argue with you here."

I said, "That's because you know you wouldn't have the last word. You're going to be blindfolded again in a few minutes."

Doc said, "See that you pick the winner!"

"You don't have to tell me that!" the kid called after him.

Then everything was peaceful and quiet once more and the man put the handkerchief on the kid. He went through the same performance as before except that the dog wasn't there. They made certain he wouldn't spoil it a second time.

The kid walked over to the box and leaned over and picked out the lucky ticket. Then he

handed it to the man. Everyone looked at their slips of paper and Pee-wee pulled off the handkerchief and looked at his slip. Goodnight, I was nervous then, you can bet, and so was Doc and Dub—I could tell by their faces.

So the man read out the number then and it was four thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine. Oh boy, we all held our breaths when we looked at our slips to make sure we hadn't read them wrong the first time.

I was two thousand numbers away and Doc and Dub were more than that. Then the three of us looked at Pee-wee to see if he was wearing the victory smile like he had planned. But he wasn't—he was just standing there staring at the ticket man. He didn't look sad and he didn't look glad. He acted as if he didn't know that anything had happened.

So just as Doc was saying we ought to call to him a man came hurrying through the crowd and went right up to the booth. He handed his slip over to the ticket man and everyone began cheering.

The kid stepped up and looked over the ticket man's shoulder as if he wanted to make sure he

wasn't the winner. So I told Doc and Dub it was time for us to move up nearer and be right there when Pee-wee fell from the shock.

We shoved through the people and were standing right by the platform for a few seconds before the kid saw us. He still had that same funny look on his face. Then the ticket man made the announcement that the winner was Mr. Harry Salami of New York City, otherwise known as "Harry" of Harry's Famous Hamburgers and doing business in and around Cornville.

Doc and Dub and I all flopped up against each other and I said, "This is too much. Call me at seven in the morning!"

CHAPTER XXI

GIDDAP

So after that we thought it was all over and the people began moving, but the ticket man raised his hand for attention. Then he said, "I'll only take a few minutes more of your time as we are offering a little innovation for this evening's program. We are giving away a sort of booby prize for the last number sold. By a coincidence, it happens to be the number following that of the lucky winner. Number five thousand."

Everyone applauded and when that died away, who should step up but the kid himself. He said, "It's me, mister. I'm five thousand!"

The man shook hands with him and said, "Congratulations, boy. I was hoping to see you win the car—you had set your heart so on it. But perhaps this prize will be better suited to the purpose of a boy your age."

We heard Polly and Flora call three cheers from some place in the crowd and Doc and Dub

and I yelled a couple of hips and hurrahs and the kid smiled back as pleased as could be. That's one thing you've got to say for Pee-wee—even if he didn't win the car he wasn't any sorehead. He just smiled and was willing to take what came along next.

So the ticket man got down off the platform and stepped around in back of the tent and we all stood there wondering what it was going to be. I felt the same way that I do on Christmas Eve and I knew the kid felt the same way.

Anyway, the man came from behind the tent and after him came another man, leading a horse and a kind of dingy wagon. The horse wasn't so bad looking—it was thin, that's all, but the wagon looked as if it had seen better days.

The ticket man laughed and helped lead the horse in front of Pee-wee. Then he presented it to him, using a lot of big words just as if the kid was getting the Super Six.

The whole crowd saw the joke and laughed and cheered again and then moved away for good. So Doc and Dub and I went closer to the horse to get a good look. I said, "Now you won't have to worry about space in the garage at camp

or gasoline or anything. You can let the old nag have all the free feed he wants in the fields."

The ticket man heard me say that and he smiled. He said, "It's not an old horse, boys. In fact the man we bought it from was an old peddler and he said that the horse was some stepper on a straight, dirt run (whatever he meant by that), and as long as he said she was a stepper I guess she isn't old. He said she was too fast for him in his line of business and that he had bought her from some rival peddler too. We just bought her for a little joke, thinking it would liven up the program a little. She's had some lineage though—you can tell that by her ankles."

The kid looked worried and he whispered to me, "I hope she hasn't rheumatism or other diseases that horses sometimes get."

I said, "What made you think of that? I was only kidding before when I called her old nag. She doesn't look old—she hasn't had enough to eat. That's all."

"Didn't that man say she's had some liniment?" the kid wanted to know.

Doc said, "Lineage, kid. Lineage! Not lini-

ment. Lineage means she comes of nice people."

"Oh," said the kid. "As long as she hasn't rheumatism, I don't care."

So I said to the ticket man, "What's her name, mister?"

"The peddler told me she had been called Zephyr, and I think it's best to keep their names," said the man.

I said, "All right. That suits me. Only we'll call her Zeff for short."

"Say, whose horse is this, yours or mine?" the kid yelled.

I said, "What's yours is mine and what's mine's my own."

He said, "Sure, that's the way you figure things out, but I don't. I'll call that horse what I like."

I said, "Call her any time you like. If we had won the car you would be riding home in it now, wouldn't you?"

"Did I say anything about you not riding home on the wagon, if that's what you mean?" he screamed.

I said, "Well, if you were going to, don't. We'll have a merry, merry ride home with Zeff. I like that name. It's snappy."

Pee-wee said, "It's all right but I wish I could think of a better name."

"Don't kick," I said. "Your hunch about having a ride home came true, didn't it?"

"Sure," said the kid. "But if it wasn't for that darn dog I bet I would have picked my own ticket or yours or Doc's or Dub's for winner. On account of him though, I got excited and picked one out of the wrong side. I was supposed to have that car but the mut spoiled it."

"Don't you care," I said. "Anyone can have a car now, but few people have a horse and wagon so it'll be something different."

That seemed to please him and we thought we had better start back. Doc said, "Maybe Zeff is afraid of the dark so we better go in case she doesn't step on the gas."

I said, "Yes, and if she only hits on one cylinder we'll want to get to Catskill before the garages close."

"Are you fellers starting to joke about the poor horse already?" the kid said.

"Posilutely, no," I said. "Only you can't tell about these nags that peddlers sell along the road. They tell you that they are some steppers but

what I've seen of them makes me think they're the original idea for slow motion pictures."

The kid said, "Who's kicking now? Would you rather hike or ride with Zeff?"

"I think one of us ought to go ahead and tell Mr. Ellsworth that we're coming slowly but surely," I said.

Doc said, "A good horse will always get home —sometime."

To add insult to injury (like my sister says), Polly and Flora came up and Polly said, "I think it's just too thrilling to think that the little Chipmunk won that dear, dinky little wagon and a horse. Still, it would have been nice if you could have won the car."

"It's not a dinky horse and wagon at all," the kid told her. "Even Roy says anyone can have a car nowadays, but a horse makes a difference and anyhow they're always your friend and don't go back on you, but can you say the same about cars, can you?"

Polly said, "Cars don't go back on you if you treat them right."

"And horse's don't go back on you if you feed them hay and you can get hay all around here,"

said the kid. "We don't have to go looking for garages."

Flora wanted to know what the horse's name was so I told her and she said, "That's a lovely name for a horse—Zephyr! That means a gentle wind—any thing that's soft and gentle."

"Sure," said the kid, pleased at that. "You can tell by looking at her that she wouldn't chew up a fly even. I bet I could lay down on the ground and she wouldn't step on me."

I said, "Well, there's no time like the present."

"What for?" the kid said.

"For her to step on you," I said.

"I didn't mean now!" he came back at me. "I got to make friends with her first. I meant after we get acquainted I bet she wouldn't. Some horses are hard to make friends with even if they are gentle."

The girls laughed and asked him if he wanted them to call up camp when they got back to Catskill. "You can mind your business," said the kid. "If Zeff doesn't get us back to camp like you're hinting, we can sleep along the way because don't think scouts can't get along without civilization. We can sleep anywhere under the sky like it says

in our handbook and without blankets or anything because we can make a dandy bed out of hemlock branches or balsam."

The girls didn't get mad because they knew the kid said a whole lot of nothing. So we said goodbye to them.

There was a whip lying in the back of the wagon and the kid said he'd never use that on any horse of his. So the man said he was glad to hear it and he shook hands with all of us.

Then the kid climbed up on the wagon and Doc and Dub and I did too. We all squeezed on that narrow seat together—the four of us like a lot of sardines. Pee-wee said "Giddap" to Zeff but she wouldn't move. He said it twice but she stood there as quiet as anything.

"That's strange," said the man. "I thought every horse moved when you said *giddap.*"

I said, "Maybe she likes something snappier to start off with. Maybe she's a sport model."

Doc said, "I wonder if she speaks German?"

I said, "No, she looks like a Yankee—she has big ears." And just for fun then I yelled, "Come on, Zeff! Let 'er go!"

Oh boy, she dashed off like the wind.

CHAPTER XXII

ZEFF STEPS IN HIGH

WELL, we were off!

We were off those fields before we knew it. And the kid sat there as stiff and as straight as anything and holding onto the reins. He made a record for himself by not talking for five minutes.

After we left the fields we came out on a hard road and as soon as we struck it, Zeff slowed down. She went along like a snail until we came to the crossroads and hit the dirt road. Then she started into speed again.

I said, "Kid, I think this horse isn't any old nag at all. I apologize for saying that. The peddler was right. She's some high stepper."

Doc said, "Do you think she's the right kind of company for us?"

I said, "Sure. Didn't you say that word the ticket man said meant that she came of a nice family?"

Doc said, "It does. But I thought maybe the peddlers she's been traveling around with haven't had a good influence on her."

I said, "Well, that's right too. Still we shouldn't look down on her. We're boy scouts and we should help her up if she's done anything wrong. We'll teach her the scout laws and get her ready for the kid's patrol."

"Are you starting in with your nonsense again?" the kid wanted to know.

I said, "No. I'm beginning at the end so I won't have much further to go."

Dub said, "Say, I thought we were going to stop at some nice place and eat?"

The kid said, "Don't start in with that now. We haven't come to even a house yet, have we?"

I said, "I haven't seen any unless they're under cover."

"Under cover of what?" the kid asked me.

"Under cover of night," I told him.

He said, "Do you think I can drive this horse proper if you keep talking nonsense like that all the time?"

"It won't be all the time," I said. "Just part of the time."

Well, then we came to a road that seemed to run off northeast. It was paved and looked like a dandy road from what we could see of it. It was getting dusk like and the kid slackened the reins and Zeff stopped.

Pee-wee said, "I wonder if that's the way to Catskill?"

I said, "Let's go to Catskill and see!"

He said, "That isn't any answer. Even Zeff would have more sense than to say that."

Doc said, "Well, why don't you ask him the way then?"

"Don't talk nonsense," the kid said. "And somebody get down and see if you can see a sign-post or something. Gee whiz, I can't hold the horse and look too."

So Dub got down and walked over to the side of the road but he said it was getting too dark for him to see anything but trees. So I said, "Well, let's take a chance and go that way. As long as it doesn't go too far north we'll be all right."

So the kid said, "Let 'er go!" and Zeff turned around all right but just before she stepped onto the pavement she stopped.

Dub said, "Maybe she doesn't like the looks of this road."

Doc said, "I don't think she cares about going to Catskill."

I said, "Maybe you're both wrong. Maybe she needs a little air in her tires."

"Maybe you ought to all shut up for a while until you can say something sensible," the kid screamed. "How do you know why she won't go up that road?"

So with that he patted her on the back with the reins and he coaxed her like everything but she wouldn't move an inch. She stood there like a wooden Indian. After about five minutes she began to whinny and stamp her feet.

The kid said, "I wonder what that means?"

I said, "I bet that means she doesn't want to go that way."

"Do you mean to tell me that a horse knows which way it wants to go?" said the kid. "It's more like she's hungry, huh?"

Doc said, "Well, all you need then is some hay. Just like you told Polly, there's hay all around and you don't have to go looking for it like you do garages. Where, oh where is some hay?"

"Say, will you fellers shut up!" he screamed. "Can you find hay in the woods, can you? Did I say anything to Polly about finding hay in the woods?"

"A scout is resourceful," I said. "I leave it to you. You've said so yourself ten million times."

He said, "Don't I know it! I could find something for him to eat, only in the dark I might be feeding her poison ivy and wouldn't know it."

I said, "You win, kid." I got an idea then and I remembered how slow Zeff went along on the hard road just out of Cornville. Then when we struck the dirt road she went like the wind.

So I said, "Turn Zeff around. Just for the fun of it. See if she'll go for you on the dirt road."

He said, "What's the use? That isn't the way to Catskill, we know that. So what's the use of trying to make her go the wrong way when we can't make her go what we think is the right way!"

I said, "What do we care whether it's right or wrong? We started out this morning to go where we pleased and if Zeff is pleased to go the wrong way why she has a good reason and I'm

pleased then, too. I'll leave it to Doc and Dub."

They said they were both pleased but the kid didn't say anything. He turned Zeff around and when she was facing the wrong way he pulled the reins and *zip,* away we went!

Doc said, "You see, kid! Take that tip from Zeff and don't forget she's a lady who wants her own way."

Pee-wee said, "If we get into trouble for not getting back to Camp tonight, you fellers can take the blame. Gee whiz, that's no way to train a horse. You got to make them do as you say, not do as they want to do. Now on account of you letting her have her own way we don't know where we're going. We may even get lost."

I said, "We should worry, where we go. One place is as good as another if not more so."

"There you go," yelled the kid. "Whenever you say nonsensical things like that she runs as if she's crazy. Even you make a horse crazy!"

Pee-wee was telling the truth about that. The horse did run as if she was crazy. And she kept going faster and faster all the time.

CHAPTER XXIII

STALLED

WELL, she went until it seemed as if the trees were passing us by instead of us passing by the trees. That's how fast she went.

Doc yelled, "No Krusher Super-Six has anything on Zeff."

"You said it," I yelled back. "You'd think she was going to a fire or something."

"I think that she's running away," the kid said kind of scared like. "Isn't there any way I can stop her?"

I said, "Sure. Say to her what Paul Revere said to his horse when he got to the end of his ride."

"What did he say?" the kid wanted to know.

"He said, 'Whoa!' " I said.

"You're a fool!" he roared. "You can still say things like that when you don't know if we're in danger or not."

Dub said, "Tighten the reins and see what she does."

The kid did but Zeff took another leap and he almost lost the reins. Dub fell backwards into the wagon and just laid there and Doc and I had to hold on to each other to keep from falling off.

"Home was never like this," I said.

Doc said, "We'd better just shut our eyes and see what happens."

"If I wasn't holding these reins so tight you'd see what happens," Pee-wee said. "If one of you doesn't think of something to do we're going to have a catas-ca-ta—an accident."

"Who can think at a time like this," I said. "All I can think of is where we're going to land."

It was getting so dark we could hardly see each other's faces. We didn't have a lantern on the wagon or anything and there were hardly any lights along that road. All I was afraid of was that we'd go kerplunk into a car if any happened along. But it was an off road and that was a lucky thing for us.

So just about the time we were getting ready to

shake hands with each other for the last time, we came to a small wooden bridge that was paved with concrete. There was a light on the further end and we could see that the road beyond was concrete too.

Well, Zeff no sooner stepped on that bridge than she stopped. Doc fell backwards alongside of Dub, and the kid sat still with the reins in his hands as tight as ever.

So I said, "Can you imagine a peddler driving our gentle zephyr?"

"Zephyr is good," Doc said from the back of the wagon. "She should have been named Storm or something wild. No zephyr ever blew like that—never!"

Zeff stood there as if she was listening to every word we said about her. First one ear would move, then the other. Pee-wee watched her and then he said, "What do you s'pose is the matter with her, anyway? Now she's standing there like some dummy. She either runs away with us or she doesn't move at all. If you can figure her out, I can't."

"She's just a girl," I said, sadly. "Don't try to figure her out. Anyway we have enough to

worry us without hearing about figures. It makes me think of September."

"Well, we can't stay here all night!" the kid said to Zeff. "What are you going to do—move or not?"

Now that I think of it, Zeff was a very intelligent horse because when the kid asked her that she started pawing the ground with her front leg and made her ears go up and down. So I said, "Maybe that's a deaf and dumb sign in horse language."

Pee-wee said, "I bet she's hungry for sure this time. I better hunt around for some grass or something, huh?"

I said, "We can only try everything once. If that doesn't work we'll have to leave Zeff alone on the bridge at midnight."

So the kid got down and I took the reins in case Zeff should get an inspiration to start off again. I started to talk about food and Doc said he had forgotten what it tasted like.

It seemed as if the kid was gone an awful long while before I saw him at the far end of the bridge. So I called to him and said, "What were you doing, kid. Eating the poor horse's hay?"

He said, "I wish I could. I'm hungry enough, you can bet."

When he got up to the wagon he had a whole armful of grass. Doc said, "Are we supposed to divide this in equal parts?"

The kid said, "No. It's for the horse. To get her started."

I said, "Don't get her started too much unless you're up on the wagon."

There wasn't any danger of that we soon found out because food wasn't what Zeff wanted. The kid put the grass at her feet and right under her nose but she didn't budge. He did everything in fact but force it down her throat.

I told the kid then to walk ahead a little way and see what Zeff would do. But she did the same thing as before—she didn't do anything. She didn't even wriggle her ears when he held the grass way out in front of her to coax her on.

"We're in a nice fix now!" said the kid disgustedly. "That's what you get for letting her have her own way. We're on the wrong road and we can't even get her started. Could anything be worse than that?"

"Yes," I said, sadly. "A thunderstorm."

"Gee whiz," said Pee-wee looking at the sky. "It does look like rain. Suppose it should, huh?"

"We'll crawl underneath the wagon and we won't get wet," I said.

"Can't you fellers look at anything serious?" he said. "One of us will have to hike on somewhere and see if we can't get something to make her move. Get help. You don't think I'd leave her alone, do you? Gee whiz, you don't get a horse for twenty-five cents every day of your life, do you?"

Doc said, "If you feel that way there's only one thing to do and that is to phone from the nearest house."

"Why phone?" the kid wanted to know. "Where?"

"To a garage," said Doc, sprawling himself out in the back of the wagon. "We'll tell them there's a horse that needs towing in."

The kid threw down the hay he had in his hand and walked away without a word.

CHAPTER XXIV

SWAMPED IN THE SWAMP

I GUESS he wanted to get out of our reach because he walked to the other end of the bridge and sat down on the railing. While I was watching him I got thinking things over and I remembered that Zeff had stopped short just as she came to the other paved road too.

So I told Doc and he said, "Come to think of it she did all her speedy work on the dirt roads, didn't she! Turn her around and see what happens."

When Pee-wee heard us talking he came up just in time to hear what Doc said. He stood thinking for a few minutes and then he said, "We'll be going back the same way and if she won't go on paved roads as you say what's the use?"

"As long as she keeps going, what do we care?" I said. "We're sure to get somewhere and if it makes her happy to run on dirt roads, why I'm pleased."

"You're pleased to get in trouble," he yelled. "We can't be driving a horse back and forth on dirt roads all night just to make her happy when we'll get in trouble on account of it."

While the kid was broadcasting I turned Zeff around. All of a sudden there was a terrible crash of thunder and a streak of lightning zipped across the sky.

We hardly knew what happened it came so quick, but that horse just bolted and flew around —under the bridge. I was too scared to jump and all I heard was a yell from the kid. I could feel Doc and Dub holding on to me and to the seat I was sitting on.

I was going to tell them not to dive when we felt the wheels sort of sink. My heart sank too and all I could feel was that we kept going down——

I put one hand out to feel for the water but there wasn't any. Still I knew we were sinking sort of—sinking in something. Then in a hoarse voice, Doc said, "It isn't water, Roy. *It's swamp!*"

Oh boy, but I shivered. I couldn't see Zeff or anything. I could only feel Doc and Dub

holding on to the seat and to me. But I managed to say, "What's happening?"

Dub said, "The rear wheels are sunk up to the hub and I think we're still going."

Zeff whinnied then and the kid yelled, "Where are you?"

So we called back and told what had happened and for him to stay where he was. Gee, we were wishing for a flashlight, when the lightning flashed across the bridge again. I could see Zeff then and she was up to her knees in the swampy place. She gave a terrible tug but she couldn't pull us out.

Dud said, "I think the kid ought to run and see if he can get help. Maybe we're in quicksand or worse!"

I told Pee-wee and he called back for us not to worry, that he'd get help—somehow. Then he yelled, "I think I hear a car coming, fellers! I'm sure I hear one!"

That was good news, you can bet, and Doc and Dub held on tighter than ever. None of us dared move for fear the movement would sink the wagon more. It seemed if we only said yes or no that we could feel it go deeper.

So we didn't say anything then but just waited

and listened and at first all I could hear was a bullfrog croaking somewhere in the swamp. But after I got used to that sound I could hear another—very faint like but it did sound like a car heading in our direction.

It was awful waiting in that dark swamp. Especially because we couldn't see anything—not even each other. So you can imagine that it seemed as if we were there waiting for hours when really only a few seconds had passed.

Then we heard the kid call and he said, "I see headlights, fellers. As sure as I'm standing here, it's headlights!"

The thunder kept on rolling and the lightning flashed but in between we could hear that buzzing hum of balloon tires coming nearer and nearer all the time.

"Don't get scared!" Pee-wee called. His voice sounded sad and happy both. "Only a few seconds more."

Then we could see the flash of powerful headlights. We could see toward the further side of the bridge where it lighted the whole dark place. Oh boy, that was a welcome sight.

After that we couldn't hear the thunder be-

cause Pee-wee was roaring *"Stop!"* at the top of his voice. Even though I couldn't see him I could picture how he looked standing in the middle of that bridge with his legs straddled and waving his arms before those two headlights.

Then we heard the buzz slow down sort of and stop and then a sound of running feet. Pee-wee was yelling something at the top of his voice but he was so excited and talking so fast that we couldn't make out anything.

Then we heard a strange voice up above us say, "Ours for the water!"

I felt something sort of whizz past me and with a soft thud the wagon turned over with us.

CHAPTER XXV

WE HAVE LOTS OF HARD LUCK

I GUESS all of us were too frightened to make any cry. The minute we were thrown out of that wagon we put out our hands to grab something solid. We were up to the waist in the mud and somehow it felt as if it was dragging us down all the time. Just the same as it did the wagon.

It had been two men who had jumped in thinking it was water just the same as we did. Anyway they weren't hurt because they grabbed for a part of the wagon that was still sticking out of the mud too. So did Doc and Dub and the worst thing that happened to us was that our clothes got ruined in that mud.

Anyway, Zeff managed to pull herself free after she got rid of the wagon and I called to Pee-wee in time for her to meet him up on the other side. So after that we heard a sound of motorcycles and the kid yelled for us to not worry, that we'd have help.

Pretty soon we saw flashlights above us on the bridge and it was a couple of troopers and alongside of them I could see the faces of Polly and Flora. Gee, we were glad to see them, you can bet.

Those two men didn't say a word but they were glad to be rescued out of there even by troopers. Each one of us was pulled up with a rope that the kid said he found in the trunk of Mr. Krusher's car. I said, "Mr. Krusher's car?"

He said, "Sure. I was the one to foil those two men and sort of capture them. They got frightened when they saw me—I guess they thought I was a trooper or something and that's why they jumped in the swamp. They knew there were troopers after them anyway but just the same I foiled them and helped capture then like I said."

He looked at the girls sort of triumphant then and they laughed and then Polly told us that they saw the police pass them and knew that something was wrong so that they just turned their car around and followed too. Anyway they didn't start in teasing Pee-wee that time—maybe it was because Doc and Dub and I had been almost

swamped. We looked it too—we were three-quarters mud.

The kid had tied Zeff to the bridge railing and we were telling the girls how the horse had been the cause of our troubles. The thunder was still rolling and after a good loud crash the lightning flashed again and so did Zeff. She flashed away —all by herself and Pee-wee went after her.

Even the troopers laughed and they had the two men in Mr. Krusher's sedan and they seemed to be waiting. So I asked the girls what they were waiting for and they said they expected Mr. Krusher because he knew that the troopers had chased the men back from Catskill.

The kid disappeared around a bend in the road after the horse and we let him go. We had too much mud to carry to go around chasing anything. So while we stood there Mr. Krusher drove up in another car and he got out and seemed pleased that the men had been captured and that he'd get his car back.

He didn't have much to say to us—he seemed kind of in a hurry and I guess the troopers were anxious to take the men away. Anyway they all got ready to go and still Pee-wee didn't show up.

And Mr. Krusher said we could ride back to Catskill in the car he came in. It was only a small car but we wouldn't have cared.

But after a few minutes passed by and the kid didn't come they decided to go—even Polly and Flora's people. So we had to let them go—and the ride back to Catskill too. We couldn't leave Pee-wee there alone.

Gee, I was mad then and especially after the troopers told us that it was five miles to Catskill. We could hike back at that time of night in all that mud! So after we were left alone we just stood there and looked down the road but Pee-wee was nowhere in sight. Doc said, "Maybe the horse has carried him away this time. Maybe he'll never come back."

I said, "Don't worry. Pee-wee always comes back. But this time he's going to be wild when he hears Mr. Krusher's been here and all and he wasn't here to do the talking. He's missed his chance to show him what a scout can do."

So we sat down under a tree and it wasn't long after that Pee-wee came hurrying up under the light at the end of the bridge. He was leading Zeff and he looked so anxious—I guess he couldn't

see us right away and thought we had gone off and left him.

Anyway when I saw him coming along with that horse and his clothes were all torn—I knew I wasn't mad at him any more.

ROY FELT SOMETHING SORT OF WHIZ BY HIM.

Roy Blakeley's Go-As-You-Please Hike. *Page* 141

CHAPTER XXVI

MODEL SCOUTS IN A MODEL HOUSE

WELL, he was so disappointed when we told him about Mr. Krusher and the ride we almost got back to Catskill that he didn't say a word. He just told us that he had a terrible time getting Zeff and that he got his clothes torn in going through brambles after her.

So I said, "Well, Zeff is sure one booby prize if you ask me."

Doc said, "She's just plain hard luck if you ask me."

Dub said, "They say there is a jinx on some horses and I guess Zephyr's got one."

"You say that because she was given to me," said the kid. "I bet if she belonged to any of you fellers you wouldn't have come back until you found her either."

"I would have found her a good home," I said.

"Do you think I'd do that when I got her for nothing almost?" the kid wanted to know. "I

won't give her up just because she's afraid of paved roads and lightning."

So I said, "Well, lead her on then. We've got to be going."

Doc said, "I think the next village we come to we'd better phone camp. Now that we haven't the wagon we haven't the wagon."

I said, "You're right, Doc. We haven't the wagon."

The kid didn't say a word but walked ahead with Zeff and when we came to the paved road she stepped along as if she was walking on ice. You could tell she didn't like it but that time the kid was pulling her and she had to go.

So after we were walking a couple of thousand hours we came to a big sign at the side of the road and it said

THIS IS SUNNYTOWN
MAKE THIS YOUR HOME
CHEATEM AND PLOT
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
SEE OUR MODEL HOME

"I'd like to see it," I said.

"See what?" the kid said.

"Their model home," I said. "I could make good use of a model home right now. I could even sleep in a model bathtub if I had to."

Doc said, "The ironing board will do very well for me."

Dub said, "I'm not hard to please. I'll bunk on the porch railing."

The kid said, "I'm tired too but I'm not saying anything."

"You shouldn't," I said. "Not after the way you've led us astray today with your tickets for Warner's Drug Store."

"I knew you'd have to remind me of that sometime," he said. "Anyway, you can't say everything didn't turn out all right about Mr. Krusher's car. Even Polly said those fellers wouldn't be caught right away and they were. Kind of on account of me and you can't deny it either."

I said, "You ought to get a hand embroidered fly swatter for that alibi, but it has nothing to do with the price of eggs."

"What are you talking about?" he wanted to know.

Doc spoke up and he said, "That reminds me that we started out to look for a spring."

I said, "That was last spring, wasn't it?"

Dub said, "I just can't remember, it seems so long ago."

Just then we saw a light and after that came more lights. The first light we saw was a little real estate office and the other lights were along the road. So I said, "This must be Sunnytown before it gets dark."

"And I guess that's Cheatem and Plot in the office," said Doc. "They're working late."

So we walked over to the place and we could see two men sitting at their desks writing. On one desk it had a little sign—Mr. I. Cheatem, President, and on the other desk was another sign with Mr. Skinner Plot, Secretary. We could see that through the plate glass window.

The kid said, "Maybe they'll let us use the telephone, huh?"

"Sunnytown has a bright effect on you, kid," I said. "That's a good idea."

So we hitched Zeff to a telegraph pole and we all walked in. Mr. Cheatem and Mr. Plot looked as surprised as anything. I don't blame them

because I guess we looked like a lot of tramps—the kid with his clothes all torn and the rest of us looking like big mud pies.

As usual the kid got the first word in and he said, "Mister, can we use your phone? We want to call up Temple Camp because we've been delayed sort of and we might not get back till late and we'd get punished like if we don't let them know."

Doc spoke up and he said, "Did you say we *might* not get back till late?"

The kid looked at him and he said, "Well we won't, will we?"

I said, "Not at the speed we're going now. Tell them they can expect us any time—in the future."

Mr. Cheatem smiled and he said, "Certainly, you can use our phone. I'm glad to be of service to boy scouts and especially weary ones."

Mr. Plot laughed then and he said, "They certainly do look weary."

"And hungry," I said. "We're starving."

The kid said, "None of them are as hungry as I am and I'm not saying anything. I haven't even had a hot dog and they have."

Mr. Cheatem laughed and he said, "Well, boys, I'd like to feed starving scouts too but there isn't an eating place around. The nearest restaurant is in Catskill and we live there too but we're staying here for the night in one of our model homes."

Mr. Plot said, "How about it, kids. Would you like to spend the night in one of our model homes?"

I said, "Oh boy! It doesn't have to be a model one—just as long as it's a home."

So Mr. Cheatem said it was just around the corner and that he'd take us there. They were going to stay in another one nearby. Pee-wee telephoned camp and Mr. Plot spoke to Mr. Ellsworth too so everything was fixed.

They told the kid he could hitch up Zeff somewhere in the yard or in the garage back of the house. So we started off and Mr. Cheatem walked ahead with Doc.

When we came to the house the kid said to me, "Gee whiz, this is better than sleeping outdoors on the ground. I bet there's swell beds in this place. All these model houses have."

I said, "Didn't you tell Polly something about

making a bed out of hemlock or balsam?"

He said, "Sure, if you can't sleep anywhere else."

Dub said, "That's what I like about Pee-wee. He can't get along without civilization."

CHAPTER XXVII

IN AGAIN OUT AGAIN

So Mr. Cheatem unlocked the door and we walked in. It was furnished up all ready for people to start in housekeeping. The only things missing were the groceries in the cupboard and the meat in the refrigerator. And after all that's what we cared about most—a cupboard and a kitchen and a place to sleep. That's a boy scout's idea of a model home—the rest of the house could be empty for all we cared.

Anyway, Mr. Cheatem gave me the key and he said he hoped we'd be comfortable. I told him not to worry because we were always comfortable when we were in bed. He laughed and he told me to be sure and bring the key over to his imitation estate office in the morning. After that he said goodnight and I locked the door.

We went upstairs and in each of the bedrooms were twin beds. So I said I was pleased to have Doc sleep in the same bedroom with me and Pee-

wee could sleep with Dub. I wanted to have a good night's sleep, that's the reason I wished the kid off on Dub.

But after we had said goodnight the kid called us in to help him get Dub's shoes off. We each took a turn trying to separate the mud from the leather but it was no go and in the end I had to go down the cellar and hunt for a poker.

Well, that worked but I could see after we had them off that Dub wouldn't be able to ever wear them again. They had gotten so wet and the mud from the swamp hardened over the leather just like clay that it made them shrink. The rest of us wore sneakers and it was a good thing or else we'd have all been in the same fix.

It was about ten o'clock I bet before Pee-wee quit complaining to Dub about all the hot dogs that he didn't get. We could hear him as plain as anything in our room. You couldn't blame him though—it's awful hard to sleep on an empty stomach.

I felt guilty then that I hadn't saved him some pie but it wasn't so good anyway. I found a piece of rope in mine and Doc found a fly in his so you can't tell but what the kid was lucky not to get

any—he may have found ptomaine poisoning in his piece.

After that Sunnytown got as quiet as a cemetery and I knew Pee-wee must have fallen asleep. So I shut my eyes and Doc was quiet so I guess we must have both been asleep too.

Anyway I woke up all of a sudden and the kid was standing beside me with his finger up to his lips. He said, "Sh! I think there's burglars in this house!"

I said, "Tell them we're poor but dishonest and that they can have Dub's shoes. We need everything else we have."

He leaned way over me then and he said, *"I mean it!* There's burglars downstairs!"

So I said, "Call down and tell them to see Mr. Cheatem or Mr. Plot. Maybe they might come to some agreement."

The kid said, "Will you *listen!* They might shoot us and even if you don't care, I do. I want to live."

"Is that necessary?" I said. But just the same I woke up Doc and told him and we all listened then. Dub came creeping softly in the room then too.

We could hear footsteps downstairs and they seemed to be going back and forth and in and out of the back door. So we all crept to one of the back windows and looked out. It was dark but we could see a big truck and there were two men bringing things out and putting them in.

So the kid said, "Maybe it's Mr. Cheatem or Mr. Plot. Maybe they forgot something and they came back for it."

I said, "Well, this is the third time they forgot something since we've been at this window. Another thing, they don't look like imitation estate men from here. They look like real moving men."

"Well, burglars don't do that," Pee-wee said. "I mean they wouldn't tramp in and out of the house like they are doing. They make as little noise as they can."

I said, "They don't know anyone's in this house, I bet, and maybe they know that no one's in Sunnytown besides the two model houses."

Dub said, "Maybe they're two model burglars."

"This is no time for fooling," the kid told him. "Anyhow, I think they're just movers but just the

same we ought to go down and ask them why they're moving furniture out of a house this time of night. We'd better get dressed."

Doc said, "Do I have to put on that mud so soon?"

I said, "Yes, the kid's afraid. He wakes us all up because he thinks they're burglars and then when he thinks they aren't he wants us to get dressed and form a reception committee to meet them."

Pee-wee said, "Are you hinting that I'm a coward and that I'd be afraid to go down even if I thought they were burglars? Do you bet I won't go now, do you?"

So before we had time to say anything to him he had put on his honest rags and was going down the stairs. Doc and Dub and I put our mud back on again and went down after him as quick as we could.

We heard Pee-wee talking in the dining room and we knew everything was all right. That is, we knew he hadn't been blackjacked or anything like that, although you can't tell about Pee-wee —I don't think a blackjack even would stop him from talking.

Anyway, he was talking to the two men in the dining room. They looked like regular truck drivers and they talked nice and jolly to the kid. The lights were all on and the shades pulled down and the dining room furniture was gone.

So when we came into the room, Pee-wee turned around to us and said, "It's all right, fellers. These men have to move the furniture and everything out of this house on account of it isn't paid for."

One of the men spoke up and he said, "Sure, that's our orders, kids. Sorry to take your beds and spoil a good night's sleep for youse, but them's our orders."

So the other man said, "Yere, that's right. Them two blokes, Cheatem and Plot, haven't paid for 'em so we got to take 'em."

After that they moved the living room furniture and then they went upstairs for the rest of the stuff. While they were up there I said to Pee-wee, "Say kid, I wonder if Cheatem and Plot know that their stuff is being taken away?"

Pee-wee said, "How do I know? Anyhow, if they don't it's just as well because it would make them feel bad if they knew it. They mustn't have

any money because those men said they haven't paid a cent for any of the furniture or the curtains or anything."

Doc said, "Well, I think we ought to hunt up the other model house and tell them, whether it makes them feel bad or not. They might be able to pay something on it so they can keep it."

Dub said, "We want to keep our beds for tonight, don't we?"

"Gee whiz, that's right," said the kid. "I never thought of that."

So I said, "Tell the men to wait a few minutes or so because Cheatem and Plot might be able to pay them some money."

The kid said he would and then we hurried around to the office. That is, *we* hurried but poor Dub couldn't keep up with us—he wasn't used to walking in his stocking feet yet. And the streets in Sunnytown were so nice—nice and pebbly.

Well, the office was closed so we started going up and down through streets of half-finished and almost finished houses looking for the other model house.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AND GONE

AFTER awhile we came to a house that looked finished and had curtains up at the windows just like the one we had been sleeping in. So I said we might as well find out and we walked up to the front door and rang the bell.

Pretty soon we heard footsteps and the front door opened and Mr. Cheatem stood there. Well, I told him all about it and he listened. When I finished he turned his back to us a little and looked upstairs like and he said, "Did you hear that, Skinner?"

Mr. Plot must have been listening all right because he answered yes right away. Mr. Cheatem was all excited we could see and he told us to wait a minute—that they'd come with us in a second and he rushed upstairs.

After a few minutes they both came down together and we all began walking down the street. Then Mr. Cheatem said in a mad voice, "There's

no time to be lost, Skinner. You'd better phone the police right away."

So Mr. Plot hurried ahead toward the office and I said, "What can the police do if you owe the money for the furniture?"

Mr. Cheatem scowled at me and he said, "Use your brains, boy. That isn't our furniture—it's only loaned to us by different concerns to advertise their goods. Those men are just clever burglars."

"G-o-o-d *night magnolia!*" I said. "And they had a regular moving van."

Just then we saw the kid running toward us and he yelled, "They're gone! I couldn't keep them any longer because they said they were in a hurry!"

"So will we be in about ten minutes," I whispered to Doc.

Mr. Cheatem looked at the kid and smiled kind of sarcastic like. Then he said, "Do you think two clever crooks like they are would wait to accommodate the police? Why, they're laughing up their sleeves now I bet, to think they walked right in and took all that stuff from under

your noses. I thought boy scouts were observant and alert!"

"They are when it comes to outdoors and all," said Pee-wee. "Gee whiz, how did we know burglars would move furniture too?"

Oh boy, I was mad at Mr. Cheatem, so I said, "Our handbook doesn't teach us to be observant in model houses. Anyway model houses should have model locks so that model burglars can't get in."

"Yes and if we were a thousand miles away they would have gotten in just the same," said Doc. "A lot of good it would have done us to be observant."

Mr. Plot came along then and said he had phoned the police and then he and Mr. Cheatem walked ahead together. Pee-wee didn't say a word all the time we were walking back to the modeless house.

Anyway we could hear Mr. Cheatem talking about us letting the burglars take that furniture from under our noses. He said we should have known that furniture places don't send their trucks out at night to collect goods anyway.

So I said, "Lots of people can't sleep at night so I thought maybe furniture people couldn't either."

And Doc said, "So did I, Roy. Look at some restaurants. They never sleep at all."

"Anyway I didn't let them in," said Pee-wee. "They got in themselves."

Dub said, "Don't worry, kid. Your conscience is clear."

"So is the house," said Doc.

"You're right, Doc," I said. "It's clear of furniture."

Pee-wee leaned over and whispered, "You fellers are crazy. If they hear you starting to joke about it, they might think we had something to do with it. Maybe they think we took it anyway, I don't know."

"Neither do I," I said. "Where do you think they think we took it?"

Doc said, "Maybe they'll suspect that we hid it in the grass or under the hedge."

I said, "You never can tell. They might even think Zeff is in on it."

Pee-wee was mad but he didn't get a chance to say what he would like to have said for fear

they'd hear him. Anyhow, we came to the house by that time and went in.

We stood there while Mr. Cheatem and Mr. Plot looked around through the empty rooms. They shook their heads every once in a while and then they'd look at us as if it was all our fault. Mr. Cheatem did that mostly—I don't think Mr. Plot thought so.

So while that was going on we heard a thumping noise like and a cry. We listened and pretty soon it come louder than before and we knew it was Zeff. She was whinnying to beat the band.

So we went right out in the back to see what was wrong and we saw that she had kicked up all the new lawn around where Pee-wee had tied her. Goodnight, I thought—what next! And to make it worse the two imitation estate men came out in time to see it too.

Mr. Cheatem stood looking at it and at Zeff in the same way that he had looked at the rooms. Finally he said, "Well, I think you boys better take that wild horse and move on. He seems to have put the finishing touches to your short stay here."

Poor Pee-wee looked as if he didn't have a

friend. Then he said, "Do you think we wouldn't fix this lawn before we go on account of the horse belonging to me? Gee whiz, mister, I wouldn't have put the horse here and we wouldn't have stayed in the house if we knew it was going to make all this trouble but everybody has things happen to them and I bet even you make mistakes sometimes, gee whiz!"

I said, "Don't get excited, kid. If we make mistakes we're not ashamed to admit them and make up for any damage we do. We're scouts and even if we do a lot of fooling we live up to all the scout laws. That means if we can't fix up the lawn just like it was before we'll send the money for it as soon as we get back to camp."

Pee-wee looked at me and smiled and he said, "Yes, boy scouts can't sometimes always be observant when they don't know the difference between thieves and furniture men but just the same we're trustworthy and thrifty and we didn't let Zeff spoil the lawn on purpose."

Mr. Cheatem walked away. Oh boy, he was mean but Mr. Plot said, "Try and overlook Mr. Cheatem's behavior, boys. I know you didn't have any more to do with this sorry business than

I have and I understand about the lawn. Just fix it up the best way you can and never mind the money. Only try and get a lift back to your camp. I'm sorry, but Mr. Cheatem will get over it more quickly after you're gone. That's just the way he is."

Mr. Plot went back in the house then and we fixed up the lawn as best we could and it looked every bit as good as before. After that Pee-wee unhitched Zeff and we all went out of the driveway and into the street.

When we came out to the main road again I happened to think about poor Dub in his stocking feet. So I said to Doc, "Are you pleased to take turns with me and lend Dub your sneakers one at a time?"

Doc said, "I'm more than pleased. Which one do you want—right or left first?"

So we decided that I should begin and I gave Dub my right one first. We didn't ask Pee-wee because his wouldn't fit Dub at all. He has to buy his shoes in the infants' department when he goes to get a pair. Anyway we had a lot of fun walking along with one sneaker on and the other sneaker off.

Pee-wee walked ahead and he had to keep pulling Zeff along because we were on a paved road. Pee-wee was quiet for an awful long while and then he stopped and said, "Gee whiz, everything's gone wrong today. I think it's just like Dub said —there's a jinx on Zeff."

CHAPTER XXIX

ALL FOR GOLD

I SAID, "Why blame it on poor Zeff? How about the tickets and the spring we started out to find?"

"Gee whiz!" roared the kid. "Can't you forget about that and is that as bad as the rumpus Zeff made when he ran away just as I had a chance to talk to Mr. Krusher and tell Polly and Flora how I curcumvented those automobile thieves and all?"

"The answer to that riddle is that you're not a horse," I said.

"I wish he was," said Doc. "Then you and Dub and I could ride instead of pounding this hard pavement in our stocking feet."

So the kid said, "I'm sorry about Dub's shoes but just the same don't I have to hike just as far as the rest of you and am I complaining?"

"Sure you were," I said. "Not five minutes ago, either. You said everything you did had

gone wrong and you said there was a jinx on Zeff, didn't you?"

He said sure, but that wasn't complaining. "I was just talking about what a lot of trouble she was. Gee whiz, you can't tell—those real estate fellers could have sued us on account of her upsetting the lawn."

I said, "Well, they didn't and they won't and we didn't sleep long in the model house and we didn't get anything to eat yet and here it is way in the middle of the night. But we should starve while Pee-wee knows how to circumvent nature and get the bark out of the resin—I mean the resin out of the bark! Are you pleased that we should, brother scouts?"

"I should say not," said Doc. "Come on kid, hunt around a little so you can fix up some nice portions of resin for your starving comrades!"

"What do you think I am—a private wallet to you fellers?" the kid wanted to know.

"Valet," I said. "Your geography gets worse and worse."

"What difference does it make," said the kid. "You know what I mean and I'm not going to

hunt around for any resin on a dark night like this and with a horse to take care of too. I got enough to do with her—get your own resin!"

"You surround me, Scout Harris," I said. "I thought you could foil starvation any time—anywhere."

"I can," he said. "But not with a horse dragging on me. Anyway, we ought to get to Catskill soon. I wonder what time it is?"

"It must be later than that," I said.

Doc said, "My feet and my eyes tell me I ought to be in bed at camp."

"And my stomach tells me I ought to be in a swell restaurant eating a regular dinner," the kid chimed in.

"You were going to fix it so you *would* have a regular dinner," Dub said.

"Well, the night isn't over yet, is it?" Pee-wee yelled back over his shoulder. "Anyway, the only big town now will be Catskill, so have patience."

So we kept right on after that and by the time Dub was wearing Doc's left sneaker we saw some lights ahead. They looked bright and nice because the rest of the road was so dark and

gloomy. One thing though, the thunder and lightning had stopped and we were glad it didn't rain on top of all our other troubles.

In a few minutes the kid said, "What do you think that light is?"

"Maybe it's a lighthouse," I said. "You can't tell. This dark road might lead anywhere—even into the Hudson River."

"Did you ever hear of a lighthouse on the Hudson River?" he screamed.

"No," I said. "Did you?"

"Well, what are you talking about then, huh?" he came back.

I said, "I'm beginning to see things and that's the last stage of starvation."

"Gee whiz, I'm the one that ought to be seeing things," he said. "You even had peach pie and hot . . ."

"Goody, goody!" Doc yelled. "I think we're coming to a gas station!"

"Hip, hip and a couple of hurrahs!" I shouted. "It's better than a desert in the water—I mean water in the desert."

"What are you crazy fellers raving about any-

way?" Pee-wee roared. "What good is a gas station to us?"

Doc said, "What would cars do without gas stations, can you answer me that?"

"Did I say they couldn't!" he screamed. "I know they can't—everybody knows that but we haven't any car so what good is that gas station going to be to us?"

"It won't be any good to us," said Doc. "But if we had a car it would be, wouldn't it? That's all I wanted to make you understand."

"I don't wonder everything goes wrong," Pee-wee said. "You fellers do so much fooling that I can't think what I'm doing half the time."

Well, we came nearer and nearer to the gas station and then right up to it. There was a sign over one of the lights that said,

STOP HERE HANK'S GAS IS BEST
ONE MILE TO CATSKILL

There was a man sitting outside and he was smoking a pipe. When he saw us he put down the pipe right away as if he had seen four ghosts and a horse. Then he stood up as we walked over gravel toward the tanks.

I said to him, "Mister, we're just as tired as the three musketeers and even worse because there are four of us and that horse."

Doc said, "We all need a few gallons of gas to go on to Catskill with and the horse has to have her battery recharged. It's all run down."

The kid spoke up and he said, "Don't listen to them, mister, because they're all fools and can't ask sensible questions. Could you tell us what time it is?"

Well, that man laughed good and hard and he looked at each one of us. When he saw Dub with Doc's left sneaker on he laughed louder than ever and he said, "You kids look like the wanderer's return. Have you been in a battle or something?"

I said, "Mister, it's all very simple to explain. It happened like this . . ."

"Don't listen to him!" Pee-wee butted in. "He's going to tell you how I led them astray and all but it isn't true—exactly. Anyway, the reason we all look this way is on account of the horse. She ran away twice and we could have been killed."

Hank was the man's name all right and he just

stood there laughing until Pee-wee was done and then he said, "And all you want is the time, eh?"

I said, "We don't want it—we only want to use it for the bus out of Catskill."

"And that leaves at twelve o'clock," said Hank.

"If we don't make that we'll have to hike again," said Doc.

"Not again—*yet,*" said Dub.

"I'm not sure that I can even hike to Catskill in my present condition," I said. "If we keep on swapping sneakers for Dub I won't even have a rubber sole."

Then the kid told the man the whole story of our go-as-you-please hike. When he got through the man said, "That horse is more of a burden than a gift, then—is that it?"

"She's all right," I said. "Except for paved roads and lightning."

Pee-wee scowled at us but then he looked as if he was thinking. After a few minutes of meditation he said, "If you buy her, I bet you'll never regret it."

Gee, we were surprised and then Hank said, "I don't know what I'd do with her exactly, but

if you want to get rid of her why I might consider it. She's pretty thin."

"Yes," said the kid. "She's hungry I bet and you could feed her better than us because in camp we couldn't do it so well."

"I thought you told Polly there was plenty of hay around," Doc reminded him.

"Shut up!" the kid yelled back. "I'm talking to this man!"

So Hank asked Pee-wee what he would take for her and he said he'd take five dollars. We didn't have a word to say about it so I said, "Is gold more precious to you than a nice, gentle horse?"

Doc said, "Yes, and do we get our twenty-five cents out of that—that you promised us this morning?"

"That's why I'm selling her," Pee-wee said. "So's I can divide up with you fellers. Gee whiz, I wouldn't keep only a share."

"We shall see," I said.

So then and there Pee-wee handed Zeff over for a five dollar bill. Hank said he lived in Catskill and that he would tow Zeff home with his Ford coupe. He invited one or two of us to

ride with him but two of us wouldn't ride and let the other two walk. We told Hank that we were true scouts and all equal—equally tired.

We thanked him for the invitation and I said, "In our troop we always say, united we stand . . ."

"Are you going to make Hank listen to that crazy stuff now?" yelled the kid. "Gee whiz, I bet he don't want to hear that."

"And I don't want to hear any more remarks from you, P. Harris," I said very solemnly. "All you care about is money. You'd sell your best friend, Zeff, for five dollars and after all you've been through together too! Don't forget that you promised us that twenty-five cents apiece—that makes one dollar and twenty-five cents each!"

Hank just stood there laughing.

CHAPTER XXX

THIS IS A RIDDLE

We parted from Zeff then and went on our way. It wasn't long before Hank passed us in his Ford with the horse trotting behind. After they were out of sight, I said to the kid, "Haven't you any vain regrets or a guilty conscience about Zeff?"

He said, "No, don't be a fool. She was enough trouble and I don't wonder they gave her to me as a booby prize. I always get things that aren't worth anything. Gee whiz, you'd think they would have given me something a little better than a wild, skinny horse and a dumpy old wagon."

The moon came out and we were up on a hill, sort of. Way down the road we could see a steam roller and it seemed to be moving. The kid said, "Do you think that could be moving by itself?"

I said, "I don't see anyone pushing it."

"I don't mean that," he said. "I mean would a steam roller be moving at this time of night?"

Doc said, "Maybe you'd be moving too if you were a steam roller."

The kid scowled and he said, "A lot of sense there is to that answer. I'm going to run down and find out for myself."

"Go ahead," I said. "We're in no condition to run, except after something to eat."

While he was running down we took our time. Oh boy, but we were tired. We watched him until he got all the way down there and he looked almost like a speck. Then some clouds passed over the moon and it was dark as could be again.

In a few seconds though the moon came out from under and we looked for the kid but he wasn't anywhere in sight. Dub said, "Where did he go to so quick?"

We stood there looking and all we could see was the steam roller moving along. But no Pee-wee. Then the moon shone brighter than ever and we could look all the way along that road.

I was just going to say that maybe he got lost in the dark when Doc grabbed my arm and said, "Look!" He pointed down on the road and there

seemed to be something lying there all stretched out and as still as anything.

We hurried on and the nearer we got the plainer we could see in the moonlight that it was a form. It was khaki colored and I saw something red and Doc said something about it being Pee-wee's scarf.

Gee, I got so scared I could hardly run. The form looked as flat as a pancake and in a low voice Doc said, "Roy, it must have been that roller! He must have stepped in front of it and they couldn't see him when the clouds passed over that time."

I couldn't even answer Doc, my throat felt so funny. Dub was as quiet as a mouse and when we got within ten feet of the form we stopped. It was a scout sure enough and it lay still and flat right on the road.

Doc stepped up first and he leaned over and sort of touched it. Then he stood back and laughed at the top of his voice. "It's wooden!" he said and he picked it up.

Sure enough, it was an imitation scout—a cut-out wooden figure like they use for signboard advertising. So we looked around and there on the

side of the road we saw the sign it had been taken from. It said

ALL HEALTHY SCOUTS
EAT TILLOTSON'S TASTY TIDBITS

After Dub got over his hysterics we took the dummy and stood it back against the sign. Doc said, "That's a good one! Can you imagine the kid ever being rolled out as flat as that!"

"Can you imagine him being wooden and not able to talk!" said Dub.

I said, "No such luck." Just the same I was glad he was able to talk yet even if we couldn't hear him.

We decided then to catch up to the steam roller and find out if the kid had really jumped on it. And when we were about a half a block away we saw it turn off the road like. In another second Pee-wee walked away from it and when he saw us he stood still and waited.

We called to him and he yelled, "Gee whiz, you fellers are slow. Hurry up! We'll lose that last bus first thing you know."

I said, "Don't lose your temper, Scout Har-

ris. We almost shed tears over you a few minutes ago."

So we told him and he said, "If you had all run ahead with me you could have had a ride on that roller too. The man said he was taking it down that road because they're rushed with work even at night. So he let me ride with him and it was dandy."

Doc said, "And we ran three blocks in our stocking feet to find a wooden scout. That wasn't so dandy."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE SAME OLD TUNE

WELL, we were getting so tired we could hardly walk. Doc and Dub and I all had sore feet and when we still had more than a half mile to go we had to flop down and rest at the side of the road.

Pee-wee was mad because he was afraid of missing the bus. He didn't want to sleep on any hemlock or balsam beds if he could help it. He liked his nice soft bed in camp the best.

He said, "How long are you fellers going to sit here?"

I said, "Maybe longer than that."

"Is that any answer?" he wanted to know.

Doc said, "It's easy for you to make the rest of this hike when you've been walking in your shoes all the time."

"There you go again," he said. "Don't I know your feet must be sore and do you think I was kicking because you sat down to rest?"

I said, "You weren't exactly pleased and re-

member this hike isn't over yet. We were all supposed to be pleased."

Doc said, "So far we've hiked to please the kid."

Pee-wee gave him a black look and he said, "Well, anyway, I've got five dollars out of it and that isn't so bad because I'm going to divide it up like I promised Roy. I don't see why you should complain then even if you did go to please me. You'll be better off than if we just went straight to Catskill like we intended this morning. Gee whiz, you should be pleased."

"I'm overjoyed, kid," said Doc. "Where do we blow in the dollar and twenty-five cents?"

"In Catskill, sure," Pee-wee answered. "If you'll only hurry we'll have time to eat a lot before the last bus leaves."

That sounded pretty good to us so we got up and went on. After we were walking about five minutes, Dub said, "I think I hear a Ford coming along."

We stopped and listened and it sounded like one, all right. Something was rattling toward us. So we stood where we were and waited, hoping we'd be lucky enough to get a ride.

Pretty soon we saw headlights and it wasn't long before a covered Ford truck rattled up to us. The man driving it must have seen us because he stopped right away.

Then we all yelled together and asked him for a ride to Catskill and he said sure, for us to hop in. Then he said, "There ain't room enough for all of yiz on the front seat. One of yiz will have to sit in the back with the calliope."

I said, "The who?"

He said, "The calliope. I make my living with it. I travel through the country in summer advertising for county fairs and carnivals and such and winters I go through the big cities and towns advertising big sales and things for stores."

We looked then and could see where the posters had been all over the sides of the truck. There was part of a poster still sticking on that spelled out CORN—the rest of it was torn off.

When the man saw us looking at it he said, "I just got through making the Cornville carnival a success. I did it with my calliope. People hear the music and they come out of their houses to look and they see the posters on all sides. They

can't miss what I'm advertising unless they're blind."

Pee-wee was all ears and when the man got through, he said, "How do you work it, mister?"

Before he answered the kid's question he told us his name was Pete. Then he said, "I'd like to show you, boy, but I dasn't. It'd wake everybody up and they'd make a rumpus being disturbed this time o' the night. Anyway, I ain't got nothin' to advertise now, I'm on my way to Catskill for their dollar days."

Pee-wee said, "Gee, it must be swell to own a calliope and go travelling around. How can you work it and drive the car too?"

Pete said, "Easy, boy, easy. It works automatic. It plays till I shut her off."

So the kid said, "I'm going to be the one to sit in back so I can look at it."

We told him to go ahead. We should worry. We were all too tired to even care what the calliope looked like. But Pee-wee's never too tired to snoop. It wakes him up again sort of.

Pete drove on then and he began telling us all his adventures in the different places he had been. He was awful nice and when we told him

all that had happened to us that day he laughed at some of the things and he said it was too bad that all we had to eat was junk. He seemed sorry that we had to walk so much too.

Anyway we were going along nice and Pee-wee called from the back that we'd have plenty of time then to eat before the bus left. He had hardly told us that when we pulled into a little hamlet and Pete said he thought he better not go any further until he got some water in his radiator.

He got down off the truck and said he'd only be a minute because he knew a man in that place that he could get it from. We watched him go through a little path. Beyond it were some lights so we knew that's where he was headed for.

The only way we could talk to Pee-wee was to shout because there wasn't any way of climbing from the front of the truck to the back part. You had to get down and go all the way around.

Well, we were too tired to do that so we called him to come around instead. I thought while we were waiting that a little mortal comeback wouldn't go bad. But the kid wouldn't come.

He was too interested in the calliope to bother with three sterling Silver Foxes.

Anyway we sat there waiting and planning what we were going to have to eat when we got in Catskill. Oh boy, we were hungry by that time. We had all that food as good as eaten right then and there.

So while we imagined how the eats tasted, we heard a squeak sort of. It came from the back of the truck and so we stopped talking. But we didn't have to listen because it was soon going full blast.

It was the calliope.

CHAPTER XXXII

THAT'S WHAT WE GET

G-O-O-D *night magnolia!* You should have heard the noise that thing made in such a quiet town and at that time of night. It was like a dozen merry-go-rounds all going at once.

Anyhow we could see the lights going on in the houses all around. Some people came out on their porches so we got down and ran around to the back of the truck.

There was Pee-wee as worried looking as could be. He looked at me and he said, "What'll I do with it—I can't stop it?"

I said, "What did you start it for?"

He said, "Did I know I was starting it? How did I know? I was examining it and it just started but I don't know how and that's the reason I can't stop it!"

I said, "Someone ought to examine your head. You shouldn't have touched it. Now you'll have

to wait for Pete to come back and I bet he'll be wild."

We couldn't see anything of Pete but we could see a dozen or more people running toward us. I guess by that time the calliope had everybody awake. It seemed to get louder all the time.

Some of the people were laughing but a lot of them were cranks and they were mad because the calliope woke them up. So we looked all around the thing to see if we could stop it but we couldn't figure it out at all.

Pee-wee looked scared to death and the people kept coming and the calliope got louder. Somehow it struck Doc and Dub and me funny and we started in to laugh. That made everybody mad including Pee-wee.

The people shouted to us to shut it off and the kid kept yelling back that he wished he could but that he didn't know how and neither did we. And all the time he was so mad because we laughed but we couldn't help it.

Just then Pete came hurrying along and he pushed through the crowd. So the kid had to explain to him what had happened because none of the rest of us were in any condition to talk.

Well, Pete dashed in and shut it off and when he came out a man stepped up to him and said, "You be the owner of this here contraption?"

Pete said, "I'll say I am. What of it?"

The man said, "Wa'al, I be the constable of this here village of Cold Corners and this here contraption woke me right up out o' my sound sleep. Yes sir, it did!"

"Well, I sure am sorry," said Pete. "But it was an accident. This boy was just examining it while I was off getting some water for my truck."

So the constable said, "Wa'al, that hain't no excuse. Yuh hain't got no right to leave a contraption alone with a lot of fool boys. Can't tell what they're a-goin' to do."

Pete said, "Well, Cap, mistakes will happen in the best of families."

"That hain't givin' me back my night's sleep," said the constable. "Like as not I won't be able to git back to sleep agin."

In kind of a scared voice Pee-wee said, "Try a glass of hot milk, mister."

Well, we all knew that the kid wasn't trying to be funny. We knew he was trying to smooth things over for Pete if anything. But the con-

stable didn't hear it that way. He thought Pee-wee was just kidding him.

So he said, "As long as yuh think it's such a joke yuh kin all step right over to my house with me. I'll see what kin be done to smart boys what wakes people up at midnight with a dern calliope."

Pee-wee said, "I wasn't trying to be . . ."

The constable walked away. He wouldn't even listen to the poor kid. So Pete said the best thing for us to do was to go along with the hick because the more we tried to explain the crankier he would get.

One thing, Pete was a good sport. Pee-wee put him to all that trouble but he didn't complain once and he was just as nice to us as before. He took the whole thing as a sort of a joke. That's more than we could say about Mr. Cheatem.

Anyway we got to the constable's house. He was justice of the peace too, we heard some of the people say that followed us. But we didn't worry —we knew the worst thing to happen would be jail. Pee-wee was worried though.

He whispered to Doc and me, "Suppose we should have to go to jail?"

I said, "At least we'll have a bed to sleep in, won't we? You shouldn't kick—that's what you were wanting right along, wasn't it?"

"Not in jail," he said.

Dub said, "There's worse places."

"You said it," Doc spoke up. "Take model houses, for instance."

"You'll fool even when you're going to jail I bet," Pee-wee grumbled.

Pete laughed at that and he said, "Keep calm, kid. Things always look worse than they are."

So we walked inside the constable's house and he sat down at a big desk and we all stood facing him. He looked us over as if he'd never seen us before. Finally, he said, "Wa'al, bein's I want to git back to bed, I'll jest impose a fine on ye for disturbin' the peace o' this here community."

We all looked at each other and Pee-wee coughed. Then the constable said, "I'll fine ye ten dollars."

I said to Pee-wee, "It was your fault so we'll have to chip in. Doc and I have about five dollars between us."

Pete wanted to pay it but we wouldn't let him.

So the kid counted out his money and he had a dollar besides the five dollars he got for the horse. He handed that over and Doc and I parted with two dollars each so that left us with a dollar.

After the fine was paid the constable said he'd consider us dismissed. So we walked out of the house and I said, "Now he'll be able to sleep I guess. He'll put that ten dollars under his pillow."

"Yes, and we can . . ." the kid began.

Doc said, "Say Chipskunk, do you know the thought I had when you handed over the five dollar bill that Hank gave you?"

"What did you think?" the kid wanted to know.

Doc said, "I thought to myself that this time it was bye bye Zephyr!"

IN A KIND OF A SCARED VOICE PEE-WEE SAID "TRY SOME HOT MILK, MISTER."

Page 191

Roy Blakeley's Go-As-You-Please Hike.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AND THEN

"THERE isn't any sense to that," Pee-wee said. "What'd Zeff have to do with it anyway?"

"Plenty," Doc told him. "No matter which way you look at it, it shows you shouldn't have sold Zeff so cheap. Why, look—you weren't even able to keep that five dollars you got for her. That proves it."

I said, "Sure, Doc's right. You didn't have sense enough to hold onto her until you asked more. You should have gotten at least fifty dollars for her and then a fine of ten dollars wouldn't leave us all so broke."

"That's the first time we ever had to pay a fine, and it wasn't our fault and that constable knew it, so do you think I'd ever let it happen again?" the kid yelled. "Besides if I asked fifty dollars for Zeff from a feller like Hank I couldn't get it because he hasn't a whole lot of money I

bet and anyhow we're lucky we had enough money so's we didn't have to go to jail so you shouldn't complain."

By that time we were back at the truck and Pee-wee decided he wouldn't ride in back alone with the calliope again. I guess once was enough. He said he'd sit down on the floor and let his feet hang over the step.

So after Pete got going we began figuring up how much money we had. I mean the loose change outside of the dollar between Doc and I. Pee-wee had a Canadian dime and I had two pennies. And Dub—well, we wouldn't let him spend his money even if he had it. He has to work too hard for it.

I said, "What kind of dandy eats can four of us get out of a dollar and two cents?"

"Can't you always get griddle cakes and coffee?" Pee-wee said.

"This isn't breakfast," Doc said. "Who wants to eat that after we've been eating picnic stuff all day!"

"You fellers make me tired," he came back. "We'll be there in a minute so then you can decide."

Well, it was about ten minutes after twelve when we rattled into Catskill. Pete drove us all around but there wasn't a restaurant or anything open. But when we came to Warner's it was still lighted and there was a crowd of men standing outside talking.

So the kid said, "Well, I guess we'll have to go in there and each get a banana split like we started out for today. We can't get anything else now."

I said, "Not even the bus to take us back to camp."

We said goodbye to Pete and then we got down and walked across the sidewalk toward the store. Well, the men all stopped talking to look at us and laugh. We didn't blame them at all—we had to laugh at ourselves.

Anyway, one of the men standing near the door said, "Did you kids get lost in the mountains or something?"

Pee-wee spoke up and he said, "Mister, boy scouts don't get lost. If we did we can find our way back by the stars. The reason we look this way is on account . . ."

"Don't listen to him," I butted in. "He's go-

ing to tell you an old horse story. He wants to blame all our troubles on a poor old horse that wasn't afraid of anything but paved roads and lightning."

"That's a million times you've said that to people!" the kid screamed. "You even had to say that to Hank."

The men all looked at each other like and one man who was tall leaned over and said, "What did you say about Hank? Tell us again!"

So we did and they all listened and seemed to look sorry for the kid when we told them how we had to hand over the money we got for Zeff. Nobody said a word until we got through.

Then the tall man looked at the others and he said, "Why, they must be the same kids!"

"They must be!" all the rest said.

We didn't know what to make of it because they stood there and shook their heads at us pitifully like. You'd think we were four orphans or something.

CHAPTER XXXIV

PEE-WEE NEEDS SYMPATHY

FINALLY the tall man said, "It's too bad you didn't hold onto that horse, youngsters!"

Pee-wee said, "Why, mister?"

"Because she was a valuable nag," said the tall man. "In fact she's worth a fortune."

I said, "The which?"

He said, "It's true as true can be. D'ye know the feller you kids sold her to—Hank?"

We all shook our heads.

"Well he lives here," said the man. "About a half an hour ago Hank stopped in front of this here drug store with that horse tied to his Ford. He couldn't get the car going so he decided to leave it here all night and take the nag home.

"So he untied her and mounted her thinking he'd have a nice ride home. He used to be a cowboy out West, Hank did, so he can ride bareback and everything. Well, after he got all set the horse wouldn't go.

"Just then one of those big rich guys from Noo York stopped here in front with his swell car. He got out to go in the drug store but when he heard Hank trying to make the horse move he stopped and watched. You could tell he was interested in horses all right.

"Anyway, Hank couldn't get her going and finally the feller stepped over and asked him what the trouble was. Hank told him then and about how he came to buy her from you kids. He told the feller how you even warned him that she wouldn't start of her own accord on paved roads —that you had to lead her.

"Well, that rich guy listened to Hank and finally he went closer and looked the horse over from head to foot. Then he sort of whispered something in her ear.

"Hank said he heard the feller whisper, 'Come on, Maid! That's a good girl!' And anyway he said he'd be darned if the horse didn't move right away.

"So then the feller whispered to her some more and the horse whinnied and rubbed her head on his shoulder as if he was a long lost friend. So

Hank got down and asked the feller if he ever saw the horse before.

"The feller smiled to Hank and got out a Noo York newspaper that was in his pocket and he said to look at it. We all walked over then and looked too and we could see a picture of a horse and underneath it said there was five thousand dollars reward offered for her because she was a famous race horse named Maid of Peace. Someone had stolen her two months ago.

"After that the feller pointed to a picture alongside of the horse's picture and it said he was Tom Turfman, owner of the horse. We all knew then that the rich guy was Turfman himself because you couldn't mistake him from his picture in the paper. And anybody could see that the horse knew him too.

"So he tied Maid of Peace up behind his own car and told Hank to step into the drug store with him. We heard the whole thing and we saw Turfman sit down at the counter in there and take out his check book and write out a five thousand dollar check for lucky Hank."

I wanted to say something because Pee-wee

looked as if he was going to have a fit or something. But the man went on talking so I had to wait.

So he said, "Then Tom Turfman came out and drove away. And then Hank came out and showed us the check. I just told him he should worry that he couldn't get his flivver started. He can buy a better car now."

I said, "Mister, don't say any more. We're too delicate to stand any more news like that. And anyhow our little shrimp here will never get over how he almost didn't get a five thousand dollar reward."

The tall man said, "That's too bad. That's what I said to Hank when he told me he bought the horse from four mud covered scouts. I said it was a shame to think you couldn't o' held onto her till you got to Catskill. You would o' had every bit as much chance o' gettin' that reward as Hank did."

"No, we wouldn't," said Doc. "We would have missed Tom Turfman by about two minutes."

I didn't have the heart to say anything to kid Pee-wee. He looked disappointed enough so to

cheer him up I said, "One thing, we can have a banana split at last!"

Pee-wee looked up at me and kind of smiled and he said, "Sure, let's go in. I'm hungry."

CHAPTER XXXV

A BANANA STORY

MR. WARNER was just going to close up but when he saw the kid with us he changed his mind and quickly went behind the soda fountain. He knows from experience that Pee-wee means business.

Anyhow he asked us what we were doing away from camp at that late hour so we had to tell the whole sad story over for the skaty-eighth time. I told Doc we ought to have circulars printed so that we could give them out to each one who wanted to know.

Mr. Warner was sorry to hear it. Especially about Zeff. He said it was just a case of hard luck. So Pee-wee spoke up then and he said, "Anyway my mother says money isn't everything. Maybe even if I got that reward instead of Hank —maybe I wouldn't have kept it anyhow. I might have donated it to the scouts."

I said, "Instead Hank's donating it to a new

car so it doesn't make any difference who got it."

"How can you say it doesn't make any difference?" the kid wanted to know. "Isn't it better for the scouts to get the benefit of it than a car that will probably get all smashed up anyway?"

I said, "The difference is that you're one of the scouts who it would have been donated to and you'd smash the five thousand as quick as the car would smash. You look all smashed now and you haven't anything but a Canadian dime either."

And that was true because in the light he looked like a war veteran. Poor Pee-wee—he got all the damage from Zeff and Hank got the reward. Anyhow he had a lot of fun out of it and so did we.

Pee-wee said, "Well anyhow we had it all made up this morning to each have a banana split and we didn't get here on account of a farmer that was too mean to let us walk through his field that was full of weeds. But we foiled him because we're here even if it is thirteen hours afterward. We're here now for a banana split and gee whiz, I'm starved!"

Mr. Warner looked at the kid and he smiled.

He said, "Well, young fellow, if you're starved I'm sorry. And if you're looking for banana splits, I'm sorrier still."

We all said, *"Why?"*

"Because I'm all out of bananas!" said Mr. Warner.

The space between these two paragraphs is where we all fainted on the soda counter. When we came to Mr. Warner was talking and he said, "You see boys, at the place where I buy the bananas they told me they were to get a shipment of them by truck but it seems the driver is a very nervous fellow.

"He phoned this afternoon and told them that he had heard that the state police were questioning everybody along the highway on account of two men who had stolen a very expensive car from the Cornville carnival. He said he wouldn't take the chance and come to Catskill under any consideration because it would be dark before he left and it seems he explained that he was once held up and blackjacked one night by two such men who abandoned the car they had stolen and forcibly took the truck he was driving to escape

in. So you can't blame him for wanting to be cautious."

I said, Posilutely, no. So that's the story of the bananas. Then you haven't any bananas?"

Mr. Warner laughed and he said, "No, I haven't any bananas and I'm sorry."

"So am I," I said.

All Pee-wee said was, "Can you beat my luck?"

"Keep up your spirits, kid," I said. "Maybe Mr. Warner has something nice, like a chocolate ice cream . . ."

"I'm afraid that's too soft, boys," Mr. Warner said almost sadly. "In fact all the cream is too soft tonight. It's been an unusually warm day. I can give you some nice plain soda."

"Have you any nice salt water taffy?" Doc butted in.

"We surely have," Mr. Warner laughed. "Do you want some?"

I said, "How about popcorn—have you any of that?"

He said, "No, but we have cracker jack and that's just like popcorn."

Pee-wee scowled at us and he said, "You all make me sick!" Then he turned around on his

stool toward Mr. Warner and he said, "Don't pay any attention to them. They're stringing you just like they're stringing me. They know if I was dying of starvation this minute, that I wouldn't want any more soda or salt water taffy or popcorn or anything that's like popcorn. I'm so sick of it—it makes me sick to say it even. I want something solid like."

"Like bananas," said Dub.

"Shut up!" said the kid. "You're just like all the crazy Silver Foxes now!"

I said, "It's too bad, but if we only had some ham we could build a fire somewhere and cook some ham and eggs if we only had some eggs."

CHAPTER XXXVI

WHO SAID—HAY?

PEE-WEE looked at Mr. Warner and he said, "You see what they do! Nothing but fool all the time instead of thinking how we're going to get back to camp tonight."

Mr. Warner said, "That's so. You've missed the last bus, haven't you?"

"It missed us," I said. "But maybe it's lucky at that."

"Here it's morning already—half past twelve," the kid said. "And we don't know where we're going to sleep even. Gee whiz, you're a fine bunch of fellers when it comes to thinking of things."

"How about you?" Doc wanted to know. "What's the matter with all the ideas you rave about so much! Where's the bed of balsam and hemlock that you told Polly and Flora about—show us something and we'll show you something!"

Well those men outside were all looking in the door and they were laughing and so was Mr. Warner. The kid knew it and he was mad to think Doc was showing him up in front of everybody. So he said, "Did I say I wanted to hike the seven miles back to camp tonight, did I? Didn't I only keep talking about that I wanted to hike as far as Catskill so we could get something to eat, didn't I?"

I said, "Sure, you've been talking about hiking to Catskill to get something to eat since eleven o'clock this morning."

"And now that we haven't had anything to eat and we're in Catskill—what next?" Dub said laughing.

Doc said, "We're going to go up the road a little way and the first soft looking spot we find we'll flop in and stay there until we see the first bus back to camp in the morning."

"That shows how much resources you've got," said the kid. "I bet you never thought it's haying time and we can sleep in that big field right up from Catskill here because last year and the year before I noticed how that farmer isn't cranky and he said if we ever couldn't get back

to camp why we could sleep in the hay as long as we didn't throw it around the field. So I just thought of that and isn't that better than sleeping in the grass that's all full of dew?"

I said, "Why I *dew* think that's better, don't you, Doc."

"Indeed I dew," said Doc. "At last the Chipskunk has an idea."

"That shows how much you know about what ideas I had," he came back. "I was thinking up lots of things only I don't tell them to you because you're fooling too much and wouldn't appreciate them."

Mr. Warner said, "Well, Harris, that's a very good idea anyway. I envy you boys sleeping in that nice soft, sweet-smelling hay right underneath the stars. On a hot night like this, you're to be envied indeed!"

Pee-wee said, "Sure, we are. Gee whiz, it's twice as good as sleeping in camp even, because we sleep in cabins up there and it isn't like sleeping right outdoors. It's more pioneerish to sleep outdoors in a lot of hay than it is to sleep in a primitive cabin even, don't you think so, Mr. Warner?"

"Indeed I do," said Mr. Warner.

"Well, there's one thing," the kid raved on. "I'm glad we did miss that bus—now that I thought about the hay. Gee whiz, I'd rather do that—I wouldn't go back to camp if I had the chance, I wouldn't."

I said, "All right, then. Let's hit the hay."

So we got to the front door and as Pee-wee stepped out onto the sidewalk we heard a chug-chug noise coming from down the street. It kept getting louder all the time and just as Mr. Warner was locking up his front door, we saw it was a motorcycle with a side car.

As it came into the light, Doc said, "Doesn't that look like Chocolate Drop?"

It was he and he saw us too because he stopped right away and pulled up to the curb. Chocolate Drop is Pee-wee's favorite in camp because he's the cook. So the kid whispered to me, "Gee whiz, that's what I call luck because I bet he's on his way back to camp."

So Chocolate Drop said, "Whar you all goin' at dis late hour o' night, eh?"

I told him we weren't going but just coming

back and that we were just ready to hit the hay in a nice big field up the road. So I no sooner said that than the kid pulled some of the mud off my sleeve and he said, "Do you think I want to sleep in that old hay if I can get a chance to ride back to camp with Chocolate Drop? There's room for three in that side car and I can sit back of him. Gee whiz, maybe he'll take us in the cooking shack and give us something to eat so do you think I want to miss a chance to get something to eat?"

Well, Mr. Warner and those men laughed like everything. But the kid didn't care—he even forgot that he said he wouldn't go back to camp if he got the chance. He should worry—his memory comes and goes. Anyway, Chocolate Drop said we could come if we didn't carry on.

So we all piled into the bathtub and the kid sat in back of him and held on. Then we said goodnight and started off. Oh boy, but it felt good to sit down on something even if it was a bumpy ride.

When we were almost to camp the kid said, "Say Chocolate Drop, how about a little eats

when we get there? Gee whiz, we're starved—I'm even worse than that because I haven't had anything to eat all day."

So without turning his head or letting go of his handlebars, Chocolate Drop said, "Boy, ah sho am sorry to hear you all are starved. Ah would sho love to help you all out in such a condition but dem trustees have absolutely, positively forbid me to enter dat cookin' shack after ten P.M. in de evenin'. Dat's mah orders, boy, dat's mah orders. Dey said ef ah do it fuh one boy ah'll have tuh do it fuh all and dat's 'bout right. Don't worry, ah'll give you de finest breffest you ever ate in yo whole life tomorrow mornin'."

Doc and Dub and I all laughed but the kid didn't pay any attention to us. He said, "Gee whiz, a lot of good that's doing me now. Maybe I won't be hungry in the morning."

Chocolate Drop said, "Yes suh, yuh'll be hungry. Don't worry 'bout that." We were coming into camp then and he seemed to think of something like because he turned around and said, "Ah jest thought ah have somethin' that'll

keep you-all from starvin' till breffest. Ah bought so much o' it dat ah couldn't eat it all."

He stopped the motorcycle then because we were right in camp and he got off and felt in his pockets. Then he brought out a package and handed it to the kid. His face was all smiles and he said, "Ah bought it at de Cornville carnival tonight. That's whar ah was comin' from when you-all called me."

Pee-wee grabbed the bag and opened it like as if it was a Christmas present. Then he took out the package inside of it and after a few seconds he said in a funny sort of voice, *"Geeee whizzz!"*

It was a package of popcorn.

So that's all I can remember because when I came to it was morning and time for breakfast. I could tell you about that—but that's another story.

THE END

This Isn't All!

Would you like to know what became of the good friends you have made in this book?

Would you like to read other stories continuing their adventures and experiences, or other books quite as entertaining by the same author?

On the *reverse side* of the wrapper which comes with this book, you will find a wonderful list of stories which you can buy at the same store where you got this book.

Don't throw away the Wrapper

Use it as a handy catalog of the books you want some day to have. But in case you do mislay it, write to the Publishers for a complete catalog.

THE ROY BLAKELEY BOOKS

By PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Author of "Tom Slade," "Pee-wee Harris," "Westy Martin," Etc.

Illustrated. Picture Wrappers in Color.
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

In the character and adventures of Roy Blakeley are typified the very essence of Boy life. He is a real boy, as real as Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer. He is the moving spirit of the troop of Scouts of which he is a member, and the average boy has to go only a little way in the first book before Roy is the best friend he ever had, and he is willing to part with his best treasure to get the next book in the series.

ROY BLAKELEY
ROY BLAKELEY'S ADVENTURES IN CAMP
ROY BLAKELEY, PATHFINDER
ROY BLAKELEY'S CAMP ON WHEELS
ROY BLAKELEY'S SILVER FOX PATROL
ROY BLAKELEY'S MOTOR CARAVAN
ROY BLAKELEY LOST, STRAYED OR STOLEN
ROY BLAKELEY'S BEE-LINE HIKE
ROY BLAKELEY AT THE HAUNTED CAMP
ROY BLAKELEY'S FUNNY BONE HIKE
ROY BLAKELEY'S TANGLED TRAIL
ROY BLAKELEY ON THE MOHAWK TRAIL
ROY BLAKELEY'S ELASTIC HIKE
ROY BLAKELEY'S ROUNDABOUT HIKE
ROY BLAKELEY'S HAPPY-GO-LUCKY HIKE
ROY BLAKELEY'S GO-AS-YOU PLEASE HIKE

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

THE WESTY MARTIN BOOKS

By PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Author of the "Tom Slade" and "Roy Blakeley" Books, Etc.

Individual Colored Wrappers. Illustrated.
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

Westy Martin, known to every friend of Roy Blakeley, appears as the hero of adventures quite different from those in which we have seen him participate as a Scout of Bridgeboro and of Temple Camp. On his way to the Yellowstone the bigness of the vast West and the thoughts of the wild preserve that he is going to visit make him conscious of his own smallness and of the futility of "boy scouting" and woods lore in this great region. Yet he was to learn that if it had not been for his scout training he would never have been able to survive the experiences he had in these stories.

WESTY MARTIN

WESTY MARTIN IN THE YELLOWSTONE

WESTY MARTIN IN THE ROCKIES

WESTY MARTIN ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL

WESTY MARTIN ON THE OLD INDIAN TRAILS

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK